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Mayor elect . . . Cárdenas celebrates his election victory in Mexico City's main square PHOTO DANIEL AGUILAR

Mexico City falls as PRI loses its grip

Phil Gunson in Mexico City

MEXICO took a giant leap towards full-scale, multi-party democracy on Tuesday as it awoke to the realisation that the once all-powerful Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had lost not only control of the capital city but also its majority in the lower house of congress.

Nine years to the day after the PRI mounted a huge fraud to deprive him of the presidency, the veteran leftwinger Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), celebrated an equally huge victory.

With about 48 per cent of the vote, nearly twice as many as his PRI rival, Alfredo del Mazo, Mr Cárdenas becomes the first mayor of Mexico City to be directly elected by the capital's inhabitants.

"It's a triumph for democracy, a triumph for the people and the democratic forces, after a long struggle," a beaming Mr Cárdenas told a PRD victory rally in the Zócalo, Mexico City's vast central plaza and the scene of many PRD protest demonstrations in the past.

Nationally, the PRD came close to challenging the conservative National Action Party (PAN) as the country's main opposition. The PAN, however, could console itself with the likelihood of winning two provincial governorships. If confirmed, PAN would control six out of 31 states.

The most significant battle was for control of congress, where all 500 seats in the lower house were at stake. By early Tuesday it was clear that the PRI had lost its absolute majority in the lower house, but it remains the largest single party and still controls the senate.

"For the first time in the 20th century . . . we have the possibility of an active chamber [of deputies]," commented the novelist Carlos Fuentes. He said the lower house "will take initiatives, instead of simply receiving initiatives from the executive".

Anticipating a parliament where laws will be passed by alliance and consensus, rather than executive fiat, the PAN's national president, Felipe Calderón, called for parties to sign a "governability pact". Its main objectives would be to consolidate the separation of powers in a country where the presidency has historically been dominant.

The PRI chairman, Humberto Roque Villanueva, sought to downplay the party's devastating setback by pointing out that it remained the largest political force. Mr del Mazo and the president, Ernesto Zedillo, both recognised the PRD victory in the capital well before the count was complete. President Zedillo said the country had taken "an irreversible, definitive and historic step towards democratic normality".

Election observers reported only slight irregularities, although supporters of the Zapatista guerrillas in Chiapas — who boycotted the vote — blocked roads and wrecked more than two dozen polling stations.

The mid-term elections also mark the beginning of the race for the presidency in 2000. Well before the count was over, PAN's contender Vicente Fox announced that his campaign would begin as of now.

Mr Cárdenas was equally forthright. "We've won the city and we're preparing to win in 2000," he said.

Aztec Sphinx, page 13

Labour criticised as Ulster erupts

David Sharrock and Stuart Millar

THE British government decided almost three weeks ago to allow the controversial Drumcree Orange parade to go ahead in Portadown last weekend because it was "the least worst option", according to a confidential Northern Ireland Office document.

The march, which passed without incident after the police and army moved into a Catholic area of the city to clear the road of protesters, led to an eruption of violence throughout Northern Ireland and set back the few remaining hopes of peace in the province.

The document reveals that the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, reached a consensus with the chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ronnie Flanagan, supported by the army and the Parades Commission, that the Portadown Orange parade should be allowed through the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road if no local agreement was achieved.

However, Ms Mowlam insisted on Tuesday that the leaked document was purely an initial consideration by officials. She said that she had worked until the last moment to find a "peaceful accommodation" between the two sides, and had not endorsed the document "at any time".

Reacting to Garvaghy residents' accusations that she had betrayed them, Ms Mowlam insisted: "No one has been betrayed." But that was not the feeling among nationalists. A senior SDLP figure put it succinctly: "She has wrecked any chance there was left of rebuilding the peace process."

While the document makes no mention of Mr Flanagan's claim that his decision to let the march go ahead was prompted by intelligence reports indicating that loyalist paramilitaries would kill Catholics if the parade was banned, the death of an Ulster Defence Association member on Monday night was another indicator of mounting instability in Northern Ireland. The loyalist blew himself up while handling a bomb.

The emergence of the document left nationalists with further doubts about the sincerity of the Labour government's approaches and assurances in recent weeks



Mo Mowlam: credibility damaged with nationalists

Meanwhile the death of 28-year-old Brian Morton, believed to have been a member of the UDA, indicates that the loyalist ceasefire, already under pressure from continuing IRA attacks including the double murder of RUC officers in Lurgan, Co Armagh, last month, is crumbling under the pressure of recent events.

With the marching season set to reach its peak at the weekend, Ms Mowlam appealed to Orangemen on Monday to show "generosity" in the dangerous days ahead.

The logic of last Sunday's events suggests that peace in Northern Ireland has a price after all, and when two opposing forces cannot be reconciled, that necessarily involves one side losing out to the other.

Road to violence, page 9

Clinton promotes Internet as free-trade zone

Nicholas Bannister

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has opened the way for a huge boost in electronic commerce by underlining his determination to turn the Internet into a "global free-trade zone".

But his decision could pit him against US state officials and European authorities who see Internet trading as a new source of tax revenue.

Mr Clinton promised last week to have policies on privacy, patents and copyright in place within a year and set out a 13-point plan to achieve his goal, including: negotiation of an international agreement making the Internet a tariff-free zone for the sale of products and services; federal purchase of 4 million items online, in order to bring government procurement into the electronic age; development of industry codes of conduct and technology tools to protect privacy online; and assurance from domestic and foreign governments that no new taxes would be levied on Internet transactions.

Many governments are concerned that Internet trading, which takes no account of national boundaries and which is virtually impossible to police, would result in a big decline in income from sales taxes, value added taxes and customs duties.

Internet traders paying virtually no tax on transactions would also have an unfair cost advantage over traditional traders.

However, Mr Clinton is under pressure to take action from American business, which fears that companies based in other countries could steal the lead the US enjoys in this field and begin to dominate trading on the Internet.

He and Vice President Al Gore endorsed a presidential task force's call for a hands-off, no-new-taxes approach to regulating business transactions on the worldwide computer network.

Austria	AS30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 10
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3 30

Hong Kong: a missed moment to say sorry

WATCHING the Hong Kong handing-over ceremony, I waited expectantly for a word of apology from the Prince of Wales for the acts of gangsterism that led to the signing of the first Sino-British treaties and the annexation of Hong Kong. None was forthcoming. Nor did any of the British speakers or television commentators remind us of the opium trade into China in the mid-19th century and the massive profits from this trade that accrued to British merchant houses, some of the most prestigious names in Hong Kong today.

To the best of my knowledge, no British government has ever apologies for these acts. Surely what brings about reconciliation and trust (between nations as much as individuals) is mutual penitence, confession and forgiveness. And Britain, despite the posture of moral superiority it now assumes over China, has a disgraceful record of aggression, hypocrisy and the violation of basic human rights. For much of its history, Hong Kong was a gigantic sweat-shop with no labour unions, primitive labour laws and a censored media. Even today, a huge chunk of the wealth of the city is concentrated in the hands of a few expatriate and local tycoons.

When the British draw attention only to the economic success of Hong Kong, speaking of its "economic dynamism" and "stability", they simply mirror the cynical pragmatism of the Chinese regime. The latter also justifies its denial of human rights by pointing to economic prosperity and social "stability".

There are people like myself in Asia who believe that the sanctity of human life, the defence of human freedoms and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable are what make for a just society; and that these are more fundamental values than a steadily increasing GNP. Yet our voice is greatly weakened by the fact that those in the West who also profess these values fail to apply them to their nations' dealings with our nations. "Free trade" and "open markets" — the rhetoric of the opium wars — continue to be imposed indiscriminately by Western powers through such institutions as the World Bank, overriding representative governments and the grass-roots democracies that the West professes to stand for. Hi-tech armaments, tobacco and pornography continue to be among the major exports of the West to the rest of the world.

The restoration of Hong Kong to China could have been an opportunity for British (and American) moral self-scrutiny. That would have encouraged the defenders of human rights in Asia far more than any jingoistic China-bashing.

(Dr) Vinoth Ramachandra,
Colombo, Sri Lanka

WE LEARN from Ian Black's interesting article (Britain finds it hard to shake off DTs, June 29) that including three desert islands, even after July 1 Britain has 13 Dependent Territories. But the real issue of the return of Hong Kong is not Britain's shrinking empire, but China's obdurate and fixed one — for make no mistake, the People's Republic is an empire. It is relevant in this regard that the name of the ill-famed Tiananmen, usually translated as Gate of Heavenly Peace, is more accurately rendered into English as Gate of Imperial Pacification: what is not pacified is destroyed, as we saw. In China's principal colonies, Tibet and Turkestan (which put to shame in size and destitution even the worst of Britain's last polka dots), people do not need to be reminded of this.

Timon Screech,
Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Japan

NEW ZEALANDERS do not kowtow to anybody (Hong Kong: the endgame, June 22). Being realistic is surely preferable to acting like a spoilt brat whose new toy has been taken away.

However, it will certainly be a different story, if the SAR Legislature decide to treat Hong Kong residents with British passports as shabbily as British governments have treated Hong Kong Chinese wishing to reside in Britain.

Peter Watson,
Riwaka Valley, New Zealand

Canada faces a stable future

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER is kind in describing Canada as "well ordered and civil" (Learning the Lessons From Canada's Fracture, June 15). However, he needs help with his analysis of the state of our union. Canadians are fortunate to have more choices politically than just an elephant and a donkey.

Although the Reform Party holds strength in the west, almost all of that is in Alberta and British Columbia, not Saskatchewan or Manitoba. The Tories ("Progressive Conservatives" — a Canadian oxymoron) rule in Atlantic Canada, and combined with the re-emerged New Democratic Party can hardly be written off as "feeble". In Quebec, although the Bloc Québécois still predominates, voter support has decreased.

Canada's future has its uncertainties, but the Canadian identity is sensible, tolerant, caring, peaceful, courteous and moderate to the point that our national image to some others is boring. Our national debt is decreasing. Our citizens are universally insured for their medical needs in a still excellent health care system.

Air and water quality in and around most of our cities is improving. For four years in a row, the United Nations has suggested that Canada is the most desirable place to live on the planet. Canada is no Xanadu, but there is no impending implosion, just periodic sucking noises from media vacuity, and some occasional gentle thunder, which will pass.

Philip F Hall,
Manitoba, Canada

The dirty secrets of rich nations

I READ with some interest Paul Callomon's letter (June 22) in response to Kevin Sullivan (Cost of Economic Equality Questioned, June 8). First, while there is truth in both viewpoints — that income levels are more equal in Japan than in most industrialised countries, but on the other hand much of Japan's poverty and social ills are hidden — the argument is largely superfluous to the real issue.

Sullivan's article is but one more among a deluge printed in the American media to highlight the ills of "paying the price to maintain . . . equality". The thrust of the article, let it be understood, is part of an agenda in many news corporations that even journalists of integrity are so much embedded in, they hardly notice how much they now tow the corporate line. Whether the picture of Japan is true or not, the reader is obliged to take it in that, "if it is to . . . remain competitive, Japan will have to adopt reforms that will create an income gap more like that of other rich trading nations". Note the liberal use of the word "rich" here, and understand that those who are not full-fledged members of "rich nations", who do not receive the benefits of the trickle-down, hardly matter.

When Japan finally gets the message like the rest of us, and allows "market forces to work more freely", it will at last conjoin with those civilised nations, of which the United States can be upheld as the supreme example, where market forces blow as freely as the wind and tide, while inner cities rot through to the core.

By that time, well-meaning men of "liberal" conscience such as Sullivan will no doubt be wringing their hands, as they do over Latin America, at the sad inevitability, while "many observer" will be quoted to tell us that the government "cannot continue to subsidise the poor" . . . if that is, to paraphrase Herbert Spencer, the "fittest" are themselves able to survive that long.

Stephen Douglas,
Hyogo-ken, Japan

KEVIN SULLIVAN'S article saddens and frustrates me. Why are social programmes which help disadvantaged people considered old-fashioned and ill-advised? A society surely grows and matures more by sharing rather than by hoarding, and by love and compassion more than by greed. Where are we heading with our egocentric insecurities?

A K Hellum,
Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada

HIV and the risk to the unborn

MIKE KELLY reports that an HIV-infected pregnant woman "had an abortion when tests revealed that the unborn child was HIV positive" (Aids woman speaks of fateful affair, June 1). It is important to note that since unborn children of HIV-infected women carry their mother's antibodies, standard tests are unable to detect whether transmission of HIV infection to an unborn child has occurred. This only becomes clear after childbirth.

In industrialised countries studies have shown that, on average, for every 100 HIV-infected pregnant women, between 10 and 25 transmit infection to their child, either before or at birth. It is not possible to predict, with certainty, which women will transmit infection.

Some factors may reduce the probability of transmission, including birth by caesarean section and a shortened period of breastfeeding. Recent studies have shown that drugs taken during pregnancy, which reduce the level of HIV in the woman's body fluids, can also reduce the likelihood of transmission.

(Dr) Noah Jamie Robinson,
ANRS Fellow in Aids Research,
Paris, France

Briefly

MAJORITY rule without minority rights seems to have again triumphed in Northern Ireland, with the British government allowing the Drumcree march. Surely the role of the police and army is to maintain law and order rather than bow to the will of the majority faction?

In Cambodia we see the impact of factions intent on domination rather than co-operation. While the Drumcree march was proceeding, Phnom Penh residents were sheltering in their homes or fleeing the city as these political factions fought each other.

Geoffrey Coyne,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

ELAINE SHOWALTER (June 2?) asks "why so many intelligent people . . . refuse to abandon their 'general loyalty' to Freud". For the same reason probably that so many refuse to abandon their general loyalty to astrology or Catholicism or whatever: the need for solace or certitude somewhere.

Bernard Delfendahl,
La Roques sur Pernes, France

TONY BLAIR warns Sinn Fein once more that "the settlement train is leaving". Meanwhile Bill Clinton cautions that "the bus is leaving". Could this be an argument for an integrated transport system?

Chris Kennedy,
Handforth, Cheshire

IF YOU remain puzzled why Jonathan Aitken needed to cover up his stay at the Ritz beyond a simple excuse, I continue to wonder why the man whose biography he wrote, Richard Nixon, never destroyed the incriminating Watergate tapes with a simple excuse about malfunctioning recording system.

Richard Herbert,
Leeds

SAILING the Norfolk Broads "it became obvious to my wife and I that we . . . should never be let loose in charge of a boat" says ? Evans (Broad appeals, June 22). I don't know about that, but it is obvious to I that him and her shouldn't be let loose in charge of no typewriter; not to the Broads at least. Here in Brooklyn, maybe.

Brian A Jones,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

AS A weedy grad with hairless ankles and a thesis to write, I was devastated by Nicholas Lezard's cruel comment (Paperbacks, June 15). Should I apply for stimulants, give up on my thesis or just accept being a "Guardian Weakly"?

Christopher Chevalier,
Honiara, Solomon Islands

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Cambodia troops loot ravaged city

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Phnom Penh

PHNOM PENH became a robbers' paradise on Monday with triumphant soldiers of the second prime minister, Hun Sen, leading the charge while television endlessly replayed a long statement by their boss justifying his coup last weekend.

The fighting erupted when Hun Sen unleashed an operation which he claimed was meant to stabilise Cambodia by mopping up illicit weapon stores, curbing illegal troop movements and preventing Khmer Rouge forces being brought into the capital.

The charred bodies of at least 10 soldiers still lay in bullet-riddled vehicles outside the home of a royalist general, as macabre evidence of the bitter fighting unleashed by his *putsch* against the first prime minister, Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

But the fighting was not all one-sided. The corpses of four of Hun Sen's soldiers lay outside a temple, one bound and gagged. The bodies of two other soldiers lay by the side of the main road to the airport, abandoned like the three burnt-out tanks scattered nearby.

Their comrades-in-arms clearly had a more rewarding mission on their minds. The death toll has risen to 32, military and civilian, and seems certain to rise. But free enterprise was the name of the game on Monday, not brooding on the price of the coup.

Sporadic gunfire crackled around the city, but with Phnom Penh firmly in the grip of Hun Sen's troops, military lorries were hurtling away from the airport laden with everything from furniture to motorcycles.

Military transports were not sufficient for the task. Soldiers commandeered an airport bus bearing the logo of the national airline while others emerged on motorcycles under tow, bringing trade to nearby repair shops.

It was not the kind of genesis to boost the image of the new-look government Hun Sen, aged 49, was seeking to sell to local and international opinion. Hour after hour, television showed him in the uniform of a four-star general, denigrating his erstwhile co-prime minister as "the traitor Ranariddh".

An offer of mediation by King Norodom Sihanouk had come "too late". Hun Sen said, "because Ranariddh is illegal and a criminal and the Phnom Penh court is preparing to charge him".

This was not a coup, he insisted, adding that he was not seeking to become first prime minister, a job assigned to the royalist Funcinpec party after it won a majority in 1993 elections. He was willing to work with anyone Funcinpec selected for the job — except Prince Ranariddh.

"This is a *coup d'état* and as coup organisers do, he is scrambling around for some legitimacy," a Western analyst said. "The only question left is whether the international community will fall for it."

Prince Ranariddh, who is in France, is embarking on an international odyssey to try to ensure it does not. He was due to meet President Jacques Chirac this week and plans to travel to Washington before setting off on a tour of Southeast Asian capitals.

His former followers in Phnom Penh, however, seemed willing to ease Hun Sen's task. Several went surreptitiously to Funcinpec members' houses to see who would agree to what with the new leader of Cambodia.

Resistance came mainly from hardline military leaders. The top royalist commander, General Nhek Bunchhay, apparently managed to escape to the provinces. One of his old comrades was said to be rallying loyalist forces in the northwest, long regarded by Funcinpec as a possible fall-back position. They may yet prove a thorn in the flesh of the Phnom Penh government, particularly if they link with former anti-Hun Sen allies in the Khmer Rouge.

But Prince Ranariddh, whose weak leadership has been a key contributory factor to Cambodia's instability, may find he has few firm friends abroad, despite coming to power in an election that cost the United Nations $2 billion.



Residents of Phnom Penh flee fighting between troops loyal to the rival prime ministers PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD VOGEL

Western governments have remained ominously silent in the face of Hen Sen's violent seizure of power and the large number of lives sacrificed to achieve it.

Governments of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations met on Monday to consider developments in a country they are due to admit to their club later this month. The group may choose to overlook its role in bringing Prince Ranariddh to power if it believes Hun Sen can stabilise the country for business.

Not that his ambition has benefited business much in recent days. Looters stripped petrol stations along the road to the airport of every fitting, down to the petrol pumps. Behind the gates of the Cambodia garment factory, soldiers helped themselves.

Cambodia has paid a much higher price for the coup at Phnom Penh airport, reduced by rockets and robbers to a rubbish tip of smashed plate glass and debris.

"Hello mister," said a soldier brandishing a bottle of Jim Beam as a colleague wrestled a desk on to a motorcycle-drawn cart and a third slung bags full of Japanese-language books on his motorbike.

They were latecomers. Looters had long since ransacked the terminals, making off with computers, telephones, even weighing machines. Officials claim the airport will be open to flights in a day or two, but airline staff believe it could take a week.

Lockerbie inquiry reopened

Ian Traynor in Bonn and Ian Black in London

GERMANY has reopened its investigation into the Lockerbie bombing because of allegations — details of which are being withheld from Scottish authorities — by a senior Tehran intelligence defector who blames Iran and not Libya for instigating the 1988 outrage.

The agent's claims contradict the Anglo-American case against two Libyans indicted in Scotland and the United States for the explosion that downed a PanAm jumbo jet over southern Scotland, killing 270 people.

But German investigators are under orders not to give details of the new testimony to those mounting a Lockerbie prosecution in Scotland and the US, according to Monday's edition of the weekly news magazine, Der Spiegel.

Behind the German stance, the magazine says, are longstanding disagreements over the Lockerbie plot and differences between Bonn and Washington on policy towards Iran. It quotes a German investigator as saying that the material would be released only when it had been fully checked, probably in the autumn.

Abolhassem Mesbahi, aged 39, the Iranian intelligence defector who was also an aide to former President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, has told German investigators during lengthy debriefings that Iran was behind the terrorist bomb, Der Spiegel reports.

United Nations sanctions were imposed on Libya because of US and British contentions that Tripoli masterminded the attack. But Mr Mesbahi says that Iran ordered and organised the downing of PanAm flight 103 to America from Frankfurt via London's Heathrow airport in reprisal for the US downing of a civilian Iranian aircraft five months before the Lockerbie atrocity.

Mr Mesbahi, who fled to Europe from Iran in 1995, is regarded as a credible and senior Iranian source in Germany and elsewhere.

UN reform resisted

Mark Tran in New York

PROSPECTS for an overhaul of the United Nations' humanitarian and development agencies look bleak as the secretary general, Kofi Annan, meets fierce opposition from department heads unwilling to yield control over their fiefdoms.

Mr Annan is to unveil his proposals to the General Assembly next week, but his reform team has failed to forge consensus among key players, leaving him in a difficult position. A proposal to create a co-ordinated development group composed of the UN Development Programme, the UN Fund for Population Activities, the UN Children's Fund and the economic departments of the UN Secretariat has been gutted, and reform of UN humanitarian activities has been stymied.

Opposition to the reform effort boiled over at a meeting this month. The meeting turned into a shouting match as Maurice Strong, the Canadian leading the reform effort, was attacked by Nafis Sadiq, the head of UNFPA, and Carol Bellamy, the head of Unicef.

"It was a very nasty meeting. People were shouting at each other. Therefore we have been obliged to find the lowest common denominator," said one UN official. "This all started with so much expectation and, if there is no substantive change, governments will be quite disappointed. People will think that the UN cannot reform itself."

The US will be watching to see what emerges from the current UN reform effort. The Clinton administration and Congress have agreed a plan to pay $819 million in arrears to the UN over the next three years — but only if the UN has undertaken significant reform, cutting expenditure and reducing the US share of its budget. In the absence of consensus on how to proceed on reform, Mr Annan will this weekend study the various options before him.

The Week

SOJOURNER, a robot rover atop the US Pathfinder craft that landed on Mars, has begun its probe of the planet.
Washington Post, page 15

CHINA and Russia have become the world's leading suppliers of the technologies of mass destruction, according to the CIA in a report to Congress.
Washington Post, page 15

A COMMISSION investigating Canada's worst military scandal concluded that senior officers had lied and attempted to cover up the killing of a Somali civilian in 1993.
Washington Post, page 15

A SPANISH prison officer, José Antonio Ortega, was freed by police after being held in a tiny bunker for 522 days by the Basque separatist group ETA.

PHILIPPE Séguin, the former national assembly leader who led French opposition to the Maastricht treaty, was elected president of the Gaullist RPR to replace Alain Juppé.

A JUDGE in Karachi charged Asif Zardari, husband of Pakistan's ex-prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, with ordering the murder of her estranged brother.

ENRIQUE Gorriarán, a left-wing rebel and the self-proclaimed assassin of Nicaragua's deposed dictator, Anastasio Somoza, was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for leading an assault on an Argentine army base that killed 39 people.

THE UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, is to organise a new mission to investigate massacres in Congo (formerly Zaire), a move that human rights groups say gives in to President Kabila's objections to the original mission.

ABOUT $12 million from a fund set up by Swiss banks and firms will go immediately to needy Holocaust victims in eastern Europe.

VALERY SINTSOV, a former top Russian defence industry official was convicted of spying for Britain and sentenced to 10 years in a high-security prison camp, Itar-Tass news agency reported.

HOLLYWOOD mourned the passing of two of its greatest stars — actors James Stewart, aged 89, and Robert Mitchum, aged 69 — who died within two days of each other.
Obituaries, page 26

DUNCAN WALKER, a British radiologist working in Brisbane, has been granted permanent residence in Australia after being initially refused because his two-year-old daughter has cerebral palsy.

Nato tries to paper over the cracks

Ian Black in Madrid and David Fairhall

SEEKING to head off a damaging public row on the question of eastwards enlargement, top Nato diplomats met on Monday to try to reach agreement before membership invitations were expected to be issued to former communist countries at Tuesday's Madrid summit.

As President Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and other leaders arrived in the Spanish capital under heavy security, political directors from the alliance's 16 members were hammering out an acceptable way of wording the agreement to defuse the looming internal crisis over expansion.

This would mean making clear that the invitations were only the start of a process that could eventually include other aspiring Nato members from the old Warsaw Pact and beyond.

The row stems from Mr Clinton's insistence that only three new members — Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — should join. "I believe that the consensus decision will be for three, but I hope and believe there will be a clear message that the door to Nato remains open," said the United States president, who flew in from a weekend break with King Juan Carlos in Majorca.

France, Italy, and several other countries are smarting over high-handed US behaviour and would like Romania and Slovenia to be included. Diplomats were braced for angry words from the French president, Jacques Chirac, who has frozen an earlier decision to rejoin the Nato military structure that President de Gaulle left in 1966. Britain is trying to bridge the yawning gap between France and the US.

However, if membership of Nato were based on military competence, the alliance would be inviting Romania and Slovenia to join instead of Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The alliance's military assessments uphold Poland's candidacy — with reservations — but are critical of the other two countries making up the first group of east European members.

Hungary and the Czech Republic have been condemned as "thoroughly incompetent" in Nato's confidential military assessment.

Contrary to declarations by Western political leaders that new members must contribute to the alliance's security as well as benefit from it, it will take many years to transform remnants of the former Soviet-led forces into effective Nato units.

The best the apathetic Czech and Hungarian forces could currently manage is a couple of battalions apiece and a handful of fighter aircraft.

The Polish army, with a proud military tradition, could do a lot better than that. But like its Czech and Hungarian counterparts, it still suffers from decades of enforced subservience to the former Warsaw Pact's Soviet-dominated command structure.

Barracks and airfields are in the wrong places, laid out to defend against Nato attack or support an invasion of western Europe. Warsaw Pact armies became bloated with middle-ranking officers but desperately short of non-commissioned officers, the experienced sergeants and corporals who form the backbone of Nato units.

All this makes the radical reform that all three countries' armed forces need extremely difficult. Token moves to demonstrate democratic control of the armed forces by putting civilians at the head of their defence ministries have not addressed the underlying problems.

Cash to pay off redundant officers, relocate bases and purchase Nato-compatible equipment is in short supply, and much of what there is may well be squandered on new combat aircraft and other expensive kit that Western arms manufacturers are rushing to sell.

Meanwhile a US-European clash over the sensitive question of the three Baltic states — and former Soviet republics — is increasingly likely with the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, flying to Lithuania after the summit, and Mr Clinton travelling on to Poland and Romania.

"We would hope that both in the communiqué and also in what is said by individual leaders in Madrid there would be a very strong signal that the Baltic states are eligible and that they will be encouraged to pursue their aspirations for membership," said a US source.

Nato says enlargement will formally end the division of Europe that was initialled after the second world war by Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt at Yalta in Crimea.

The process requires careful management because of Russia's objections — despite the special charter it signed with Nato in May. President Yeltsin, conspicuously, is not coming to Madrid. Critics warn that Nato may be in danger of creating new divisions.

Comment, page 12



PRIESTS in Nairobi fled on Monday as police fired tear gas to break up protest rallies across Kenya.

Officers used live ammunition and tear gas and clubbed demonstrators who defied a ban and gathered in Nairobi and six other towns to demand reform.

At least eight people, including a policeman, were killed. More than 100 people were arrested for looting and rioting in the worst violence since the latest campaign for democratic reform began three months ago.

In Nairobi, police pursued demonstrators during street battles, even entering the Anglican All Saints Cathedral to fire four tear gas canisters.

Police said they killed only two people who were looting a bank in Thika, north of Nairobi. Witnesses and media reports said that police had killed at least five people. —*AP*

Israeli soldiers go undercover in Hebron

EYEWITNESS
Julian Borger in Hebron

YARD for dusty, littered yard, it must be the most closely watched stretch of asphalt on the planet. At 10am on Thursday last week, the world's photographers and cameramen gathered as usual at a tea shop on the street corner where a fortified Jewish enclave has been chiselled into Hebron's old market.

By 10.30 clusters of Palestinian boys aged from eight to 16 began to form, running in and out of the shoppers collecting stones and weighing them in their slingshots. Over the next hour a score of these lads would set the news agenda for the Middle East.

A few days earlier, in this same corner of the market, a 26-year-old Jewish Russian immigrant, Tatyana Suskin, won international notoriety (and a rebuke from the White House) by pinning up a cartoon of a pig scrawled with the name of the prophet Mohammed. Ms Suskin was charged last week.

The Palestinians have begun using pipe-bombs — lengths of metal pipe stuffed with explosives — one of which cut the legs of two Israeli soldiers to shreds. The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has retaliated with live ammunition, and there are Palestinian boys in Hebron's hospital to prove it.

Last week, the Israeli defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, had threatened to use "an iron fist" if the rioting did not cease.

"What more can they do to us?" shrugged the café proprietor and his regulars. The answer, it turned out, was already in their midst.

At 10.45, as the heat settled in Hebron's alleyways, the first stones of the day headed towards the concrete-reinforced edges of the Jewish settlement, causing consternation among the shopkeepers.

"Wait, in the name of God, wait," shouted an ironmonger whose shop stood in the line of fire. "Let us do some business first."

He was fighting a lost cause. By 11am older teenagers and young men had joined in. Elderly men, their traditional authority leached away long ago by the daily violence, scurried away up the street.

They expected a stampede of Israeli troops and a hail of rubber bullets but by 11.15 it had still not come. So much for the iron fist. The market boys grew bolder, venturing ever closer to the gates of the settlement. At 11.30, with still no response from the IDF, a grinning Palestinian in his early 20s produced an Israeli flag and set fire to it.

Pandemonium broke out. Some of the men in the throng turned on the flag-burner and a handful of stone-throwers, wrestling them to the ground. There was a moment of confusion — these men had been part of the crowd and yet suddenly seem[ed] different, more robust. A few [had] taken off their shirts to use as ma[sks].

In a few seconds it all bec[ame] violently clear. Troops ran out fr[om] behind their barricades to assist [the] mystery men, pointing guns at [the] heads of the struggling rioters. T[he] crowd evaporated as Israeli tr[oops] converged from every angle.

By noon, a couple of Swed[ish] observers in grey uniforms arr[ived]. Patches on their arms spelt out [one] of the international commun[ity's] lamer acronyms: TIPH, Tempo[rary] International Presence in Hebr[on].

A TV-Bahrain reporter was e[n]raged. "What are you going to [do]? Don't you think that something['s] changed here? Isn't it getting m[ore] serious," she yelled.

The Swedes refused to comm[ent]. They knew what it meant to be [part] of a toothless international mis[sion], having served with the UN Pro[tec]tion Force in Bosnia.

It was 1pm and outside the t[ea shop the boys] had regrouped and stones w[ere] bouncing off the hot tar road. T[he] regular crack of Israeli rifles b[egan] marking off the remains of the [after]noon.

● The Israeli prime minis[ter], Binyamin Netanyahu, bowed [to] pressure from moderates in [his] coalition on Monday by pass[ing] over Ariel Sharon, a hawkish [ex-]general linked to massacres [in] Lebanon in 1982, for the post [of] finance minister.

Curbs baffle Botswana press

David Beresford in Johannesburg

ONE of Africa's wealthiest and seemingly most contented countries, the former British protectorate of Botswana, is building a reputation for eccentric governance — most recently by threatening to clamp down on the press.

International media watchdogs have protested to the president, Quett Masire, against draconian legislation expected to be considered by his cabinet this week which would license journalists and restrict foreign ownership of news organisations.

The crackdown is baffling because there has been no serious quarrel between the government and the press.

The legislation would create a state-appointed press council to which local and foreign journalists would have to be accredited. It would have punitive powers.

Media companies would also have to ensure 80 per cent of their shares were owned by local citizens — a requirement that would force the sale or closure of the two national weeklies, the Botswana Guardian and Midweek Sun, which are owned by a British citizen, William Jones.

The only daily, the Botswana Daily News, is a government-owned freesheet. "We've no idea why they have had to resort to this," said the Botswana Guardian's editor, Keto Segwai, last week.

The Masire administration already has tough laws controlling the press, including the National Security Act which was used against a weekly, Mmegi, after it reported that the government had reneged on a wage deal with civil servants.

LA to pay for 'stolen lake'

RESIDENTS near a lake that Los Angeles "stole" more than 90 years ago have won a historic decision forcing the city to spend $300 million to make amends, *writes Christopher Reed*. But the city is promising to fight.

A hundred years ago paddle steamers crossed the 285sq km Owens Lake and the valley, which lies about 320km from LA at the foot of the 4,300m high eastern Sierra mountains. Farmers used the Owens River to irrigate a rich agricultural area.

But early this century, city ag[ents] secretly bought lake-side land [plots] for their water rights, and then [took] over. Under the legendary engi[neer] William Mulholland, the city bu[ilt a] 400km pipeline to bring the wat[er to] LA in a feat that was the wo[rld's] biggest engineering enterprise.

As Mulholland opened the v[alve] in 1913 and the water gushed b[y, he] declared: "There it is, take it." L[ast] week, a member of the board of [the] Great Basin Unified Air Pollu[tion] Control District countered: "Th[ere] it is, fix it."

Mystery of Che's corpse unearthed

Joanna Coles in New York and Stacy Marking in Vallegrande

IN THE early hours of October 11, 1967, two junior officers of the Bolivian army were shaken awake and told to board a lorry waiting outside. Two hours later, it bumped down a crude road to the airstrip at Vallegrande, a mountain town about 250km west of Santa Cruz, and came to an abrupt halt.

Mario Vargas Salinas, then aged 30, demanded to know what was going on. A private burial, replied the driver, whom the officers would only ever know as Ticona.

The disposal of the bodies of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine-born revolutionary, and six of his guerrillas was indeed private, so much so that almost 30 years passed before their remains were discovered last month.

After a painstaking survey of the area where the secret burial was thought to have taken place, a site was found that had once been dug up by a bulldozer. Here, on June 28, Bolivians working with Cuban and Argentine scientists opened a trough in which they found human bones.

Over the next few days the skeletal remains of seven men were uncovered. A skull, thought to be Guevara's, is partly exposed at the bottom of a 2m-deep pit, covered by a khaki military jacket. The skeleton has no hands — Guevara's were said to have been cut off before burial.

Alejandro Inchaurregui, a member of the team of Cuban and Argentine experts, said last week that they had found a common grave "in which all the bodies were dumped in the same moment". Some were wearing crude sandals, others had military boots.

"The theory . . . that these are the bodies of Che and his comrades is strong, but we still have to undertake the work of identification."

Last weekend the forensic team transferred the remains to a laboratory. Mr Inchaurregui expects the identification of Guevara to be completed this week.

One further detail has already strengthened the belief that the remains found are Guevara's: in a pocket of the jacket that had covered the skeleton with no hands are traces of plaster of Paris. On the same evening that Guevara's hands were amputated — to provide evidence for propaganda purposes that he was indeed dead — death masks were made by a doctor at the Vallegrande hospital. The plaster traces could be a residue from that process.

The revolutionary, a one-time confidant of the Cuban leader Fidel Castro, had come to Bolivia in 1966 to spark a continental revolution by Marxists against "Yankee imperialism". His capture and execution came after an abortive 11-month guerrilla campaign and was a solitary victory for the Bolivian army, helped by the United States' CIA. Pictures of the dead hero, a potent icon for a generation in the West, were wired around the world.

Trussed with his own belt, Guevara was shot by Mario Teran, an army sergeant who had lost three friends to Guevara's guerrilla army the previous day. He did so in the presence of a Cuban-American agent for the CIA and on the order of the then president, General Rene Barrientos, in a schoolroom in the hamlet of La Higuera.

The next day, to prevent decomposition, the body was flown 80km to the Vallegrande hospital of Nuestro Señor de Malta, where a doctor slit its throat and injected it with formaldehyde.

Slung on to a concrete washing slab in the laundry room, brown eyes still open, the guerrilla who was to inspire a generation of student revolutionaries lay on view to the world's press and a troop of curious locals. (The word among the hospital's nuns who washed the body was that he looked like Christ. Several women took clippings of his hair and beard.)

Twenty-four hours later, the body was removed from view. Soon afterwards Guevara's brother Roberto travelled to the hospital to collect the remains. He was told it was too late — the body had been cremated.

The amputated hands eventually reached Cuba, but the whereabouts of his body remained a mystery — and a Bolivian state secret.

There matters remained until Mario Vargas, now a general, broke his silence to Guevara's biographer — who very nearly did not ask the right question. "Enough time has passed, and it's time the world knew," Gen Vargas told Jon Lee Anderson at his home in Santa Cruz in November 1995.

Mr Lee Anderson had already spent three years working on his biography, Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life, and had expected the interview to be uneventful. Indeed, he knew only that the former officer had been stationed near Vallegrande at the time of Guevara's death.

Towards the end of the interview, as he was putting his notebook away, Mr Lee Anderson asked him: "By the way, what happened to Che's body?" Gen Vargas replied: "Well, I've been wanting to tell you . . . "

Neither of them realised how momentous the confession, detailing the exact time and place of the burial, would be. Gen Vargas unburdened himself, describing how, once the three men had arrived at the airstrip, Ticona disappeared, only to reappear some time later driving a bulldozer.

"He dug the mass grave, brought the dump truck with the cadavers, dumped the cadavers, then brought the tractor and smoothed it over," he told the biographer.

Still only halfway through his research, the author realised he could not hold on to the story until his book was published (in the UK to great acclaim in April by Transworld, in the US this month). A former journalist for Time magazine, he wrote up the interview for the New York Times. At which point all hell broke loose.

The Bolivian army denounced him, claiming he had got Gen Vargas drunk. When Gen Vargas denied he had been drinking, they claimed Mr Lee Anderson had made up lies to promote his book. As he was yet to write the first chapter, it seemed unlikely, but under pressure from the press he produced his tape recording of the conversation (which for security he kept with him at all times in his sock).

Once the recording was made public, Gen Vargas ran away and is now apparently in Colombia under "house arrest".

Besieged by the press, Bolivia's President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada formed a commission to find the bodies and return them to the families. But the military, furious with Gen Vargas for his betrayal, dragged its boots — digging began in November 1995.

As Mr Lee Anderson writes in the introduction to his book: "The ensuing public spectacle of former guerrillas, soldiers and forensic experts digging holes on the outskirts of Vallegrande as gawking crowds gathered and newsmen prowled for quotes reopened many wounds in the country."

After four weeks, four corpses had been found — but all of them had hands. The trail to Guevara's corpse went cold.

Desperate to prevent Guevara's grave from becoming a worldwide shrine, the army continued to lie. But Cuban government forensic experts and historians intensified the effort. They scanned the earth with mapping equipment to detect "anomalies". In May they prepared to dig in places where, they had discovered, earth had been disturbed by a bulldozer.

But their work was halted for six weeks when the town passed an ordinance forbidding further excavation. Local authorities wanted the bones of Guevara and his comrades to remain where they lay, and planned to erect a mausoleum. Digging finally resumed last month.

The recovery of the body means that the man who launched a million student posters may at last be buried with due honours.

"Most probably, the body will be taken back to Cuba, where it will be given a state funeral," says Mr Lee Anderson, who had been given access to Guevara's personal archives through the co-operation of Che's second wife and widow, Aleida, who lives in Cuba with her family.

Bones thought to be those of Che Guevara, who was buried secretly after pictures of his corpse were sent around the world in 1967
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID MERCADO AND RANGE/BETTMAN

Albania sorely in need of a trusty policeman

COMMENT
Jonathan Steele

ALMOST everybody has a soft spot for tortoises. So raise your hats to the gallant Italian army medics occupying the Albanian Naval Academy in Vlore who have set up a clinic for the creatures. They dress their rat bites and give them antibiotics against the many infections that afflict this looted city.

The trouble is that this assiduous tortoise-tending is not a sentimental interlude in an otherwise busy routine looking after patients in the Vlore region's miserably equipped hospitals. It is almost all the Italian doctors do. The mandate of Europe's Multinational Protection Force (MPF) does not allow its personnel to assist Albanian civilians.

Some 125km away, the town of Elbasan hosts a huge refinery for ferro-chrome and nickel. Most of it closed when communism collapsed, except for a small branch that makes steel. The locked works survived the looting spree in March, and it was only a few weeks ago that criminal gangs stripped out machinery for sale abroad.

They also gutted a furniture factory, then took whatever modern office equipment, telephones, and lighting they could find in the town, according to Eduart Kila, the head of the Elbasan regional council.

"Europe should have taken measures to protect the economy by guarding state and public buildings, but the Protection Force has a base here and does nothing," he muttered.

Like S-For, the Nato-led force in Bosnia, Europe's troops in Albania spend most of their time protecting themselves. They sit in over-fortified camps or occasionally move out in convoy. This month their boredom lifted briefly as they escorted other foreigners to observe elections. Their self-imposed impotence did not permit them to guard polling stations or oversee the transport of completed ballots along the country's gang-infested roads.

In Bosnia the S-For peacekeepers have similarly failed miserably to help in the country's most urgent task of civil reconstruction. S-For, however, can make a better case for its reticence. The risk of bloodshed is high in Bosnia — the opposing sides comprise heavily armed combat veterans.

Albania's violence, on the other hand, is a more recent phenomenon. The threat comes from less well-armed, relatively untrained gangs, often comprising about half-a-dozen thugs and a few score teenagers. One experienced observer believes the MPF could destroy them fairly easily. The MPF, he says, should adopt aggressive police methods — even snatch-squads — to remove the leaders. The gangs would crumble.

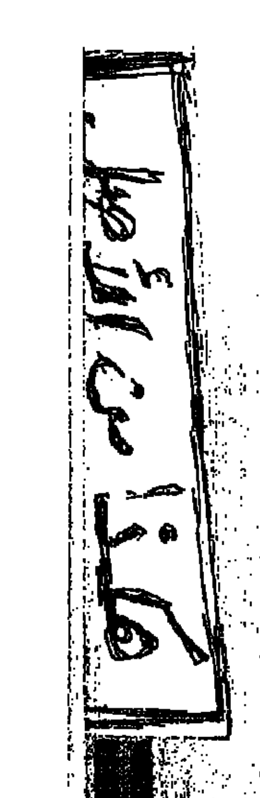
The outside world can take some satisfaction from the defeat of President Sali Berisha's party in this month's election — the United States perhaps more than Europe. The US was tougher than the Europeans on Mr Berisha even before he stole the election in May 1996. After that fiasco, which the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe first tried to cover up by toning down criticisms in its election report, Washington kept up the pressure on the regime.

This time round it was the US again, in the person of John Shattuck, the assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labour, who piled it on. He met Berisha aides on the morning after the election and urged them to accept defeat. Franz Vranitsky, the former Austrian chancellor and OSCE mission chief for Albania, did not return to Tirana until the following day, by which time Mr Berisha had conceded.

The US has got it right in Albania. Earlier than most others, it saw that Fatos Nano, the Socialist leader, was a better bet than Mr Berisha to reform the economy and sideline corrupt officials from the old communist nomenklatura who had seized control of the state banking system and the monopolies.

Partly because Mr Nano was in jail from 1993, he missed the post-communist grab for riches. Now, in line with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank advice which Mr Berisha resisted, Mr Nano wants the opening of private banks as well as the takeover and auditing of remaining pyramid funds, which still have large assets. This may not produce much compensation for hundreds of thousands of Albanians who invested in the schemes and lost, but it will prevent further damage.

In the name of a simplistic outlook that confused anti-communism with democracy and condoned corruption as long as "reform" was under way, the West tolerated Mr Berisha for too long. Now it has a chance to help Albanians rebuild their disintegrated state. Albania desperately needs economic aid, and a multinational force that provides the energetic policing which no Albanian force yet can. Italy's announcement that it will start to withdraw its troops in two weeks' time ought to be reversed — and not just for the sake of the tortoises.



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Air-raid warning for Europe



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE announcement last week of Lockheed-Martin's $11.6 billion agreed offer for Northrop-Grumman, the military aviation and electronics company, leaves the world's biggest military customer increasingly in the hands of an industrial oligopoly that has gone far beyond the Pentagon's initial call for a post-cold war restructuring.

No sooner had the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) formally approved the merger, first proposed last December, between the aerospace giants Boeing and McDonnell Douglas than the second shoe dropped, intensifying the consolidation of the United States defence industry.

The marriage of Lockheed-Martin to Northrop-Grumman is (after Boeing) the second biggest defence merger on record. It will create a company with 230,000 employees and combined revenues of $37 billion, unless the US government steps in to claim that the rationalisation of the industry has gone too far. The industry is betting that it won't.

"There will come a moment of awakening for the Pentagon," Norman Augustine, the head of Lockheed, noted last year in an unusually frank admission that defence capitalism was too important to be left to the capitalists. "They may have to say to themselves that the free-market system has no forces within it that ensure the survival of a viable defence industrial base . . . the Pentagon may decide to become more actively involved in trying to ensure that there's an adequate number of survivors."

Federal Trade Commission chairman Robert Pitowfsky warned even before the Boeing merger that he was worried about the implications for competition on price and technical innovation. The FTC only approved Boeing's earlier purchase of Rockwell's aerospace and defence business on condition that Boeing took steps to guarantee competition in key areas. But the FTC's qualms have now been overcome.

This may or may not have had something to do with the repeated presence of Boeing's top lobbyist Chris Hansen at those fund-raising coffee mornings which President Clinton hosted last year. No doubt Clinton was too polite to comment on the interesting fact that Boeing paid no federal taxes in 1995, and even managed to get a $33 million rebate, thanks to the Foreign Sales Corporate Tax Credit and generous deductions available for research and development. Not that this stops Boeing from squealing with rage at the "state subsidies" that European governments make to their own aerospace champion, Airbus Industrie.

The Lockheed-Northrop deal puts intense new pressure on the European defence industry, which has been scrambling through political obstacles to merge and buy its way into contention with the new American giants.

The Commission of the European Union has threatened to bar the merger on competition grounds, or at least to impose swingeing penalties since it can hardly hope to stop it altogether. (The logical contradiction of the EU complaining of American arrogance in imposing its own laws on foreign businessmen presuming to trade with Cuba, while trying to stop two US-owned companies from merging, has yet to penetrate the European mind.)

"The next evolutionary step is that US industry will start looking for acquisitions in Europe, now that they have nearly completed their national restructuring," Jean-Louis Fache of Aerospatiale told Defense News last week. Defense News also reported a possible French mega-merger of Aerospatiale, Thomson-CSF and Dassault Aviation. The sudden turmoil in the industry also reflects the sharpening competition for the new market of the eastern European countries now poised to enter the enlarged Nato alliance.

The accumulated purchases and mergers of the US defence sector now top $100 billion since the famous "Last Supper" in 1993, when then-defence secretary William Perry called in the industry leaders to tell them that the Pentagon wanted an intense rationalisation of a sprawling industry that could no longer prosper on cold war defence contracts. He urged a swift restructuring that would leave the US best placed to dominate world export sales.

The Lockheed-Northrop merger creates a third giant to join the new Boeing-McDonnell Douglas group, which is strongest in aircraft, and the Raytheon group, the smallest of the three. Raytheon specialises in missiles and electronics, after its own $12.5 billion purchase of the defence holdings of Hughes Electronics and Texas Instruments.

Lockheed, which began the flurry of mergers by buying Martin Marietta for $10 billion in 1995, is a leading manufacturer of such military aircraft as the F-117 Stealth warplane, the F-16 fighter and the Hercules cargo workhorse. It is also a leading manufacturer of strategic and tactical missiles and aerospace electronics.

Northrop, which has just seen its hopes of $27 billion in new orders for nine of its B-2 Stealth bombers put on hold by Congress, had just completed its own $5 billion expansion programme. Northrop bought Grumman aircraft and the defence electronics division of Westinghouse. Half of its $8 billion annual revenues come from aircraft, including the F-18, and half from electronic systems.

A new battle is now being joined between Boeing and Lockheed to produce the new JSF (Joint Strike Fighter) for the US Air Force and Navy, and for Britain's Royal Navy. A contract worth $300 billion over the next 20 years, it will define the future of the industry. To some extent it already has: McDonnell Douglas agreed to merge with Boeing when it was excluded from the competition to build the JSF.

British Aerospace, which was initially linked with McDonnell Douglas, was wooed hard by both groups to be a leading partner in the JSF contract because of the political weight of the Royal Navy's involvement. At the Paris air show last month, BAe announced it would team up with Lockheed. BAe is also a major partner in the Airbus consortium, which has been in discussions with Lockheed about co-operating to develop the new Airbus A3XX jumbo jet, against Boeing's dominance in commercial aviation.

In the immediate future, the European defence market is also vital because of the prospect of selling $10 billion of advanced Western fighters to the new Nato countries of eastern Europe. The International Monetary Fund has already expressed concern about the broader economic impact of defence spending on fledgling economies, but the US defence groups have been pouring money into US political campaigns and lobbying senators to ensure that Nato enlargement — and the eventual sales bonanza — goes ahead.

Just to ensure it does, Lockheed's director of strategic planning, Bruce Jackson, last week confirmed that he had become the president of the US Committee to expand Nato.

AMERICA'S defence industry still accounts for 2.5 per cent of US gross domestic product — about $170 billion a year — although its consolidation has seen employment drop from almost 4 million in 1987 to 2.6 million today. And the Pentagon's budget for weapons procurement, close to $100 billion a year at the 1988 peak of cold war spending, has shrunk to $40 billion this year.

The defence industry says this is about two-thirds of what will be needed over the next decade to modernise US military hardware. That means the companies that remain big enough to survive in the current spending trough should benefit in the future.

The new pecking order puts Lockheed-Northrop on top, with annual sales of $38 billion, closely followed by Boeing-McDonnell Douglas, with sales of $35 billion (of which just over half comes from commercial aviation). Raytheon with sales of $21 billion is now straining to service its $11 billion debt, and may itself become a takeover target unless the Pentagon calls a halt to the furious process it has unleashed.



Marriage made in the skies . . . Lockheed's F16 fighter, above, and Northrop's B-2 stealth bomber, below PHOTOGRAPH: KEN SAUNDERS

A certain rough symmetry is emerging, in which Boeing looks likely to dominate the commercial aviation market, with spirited competition from Europe's Airbus, while Lockheed depends on its dominance in missiles and the help of BAe to compete with Boeing for the military aerospace market.

You can see why the French want to restructure their defence industry in order to compete, even though they spurned the BAe proposal for a Euro-team, bringing BAe, Germany's DASA (Daimler-Benz Aerospace) and Aerospatiale together.

This is complex stuff. While co-operating with Lockheed on the JSF, BAe continues to work with Boeing-McDonnell Douglas on making the Harrier jump-jet and the new T045 Goshawk trainer. It is also competing head-to-head around the world against Lockheed's F-16 fighter in alliance with Sweden's Saab, in a joint marketing deal to sell the Gripen fighter.

As well as being complex, it is intensely competitive. Even before the Boeing merger, the "strategic collaboration" pact under which McDonnell Douglas agreed to become sub-contractors on the next model of the Boeing 747, contained a "no-compete" clause designed to bar Airbus Industrie from access to McDonnell Douglas technology and finance as a risk-sharing partner for the proposed Airbus A3XX jumbo jet. You can also understand why the French keep hinting darkly about Anglo-Saxon plots, by which they mean their suspicion that BAe could yet be a juicy takeover target for Lockheed, becoming another Anglophone Trojan horse in Europe. If so, the French will have only themselves to blame after turning down the BAe plan for a European defence super-merger.

The new Boeing-McDonnell giant dwarfs Europe's Airbus, and will hold nearly two-thirds of the world's commercial airline market, well over half of US military aircraft production, and almost all US military helicopters. Its combined sales of almost $50 billion catapult the new jumbo into the top ten of US corporations, employing some 200,000 people and sharing a joint backlog of more than $120 billion in orders.

McDonnell Douglas has for two decades been the dominant aerospace contractor to the Pentagon, with sales averaging $8-10 billion a year, while Boeing's military sales have averaged around half that level. Lockheed usually ran close behind McDonnell Douglas with sales of around $7 billion, and Martin Marietta was neck and neck with Boeing at $5 billion.

The size of the Boeing-McDonnell Douglas group conveys its own advantage in the high-cost business of developing new airliners and through the marketing weight of the behemoth which will now in effect become the sole US champion. Clinton has already intervened with big customers, including the Saudi monarchy, to seal sales of Boeing aircraft.

Boeing has one serious rival left for the Pentagon's procurement budget, the Lockheed group. But while the Pentagon's spending power looks likely to grow only modestly over the next decade until the JSF contracts kick in, the world's commercial aircraft market is set to boom.

The International Air Transport Association forecasts annual growth of more than 7 per cent annually for the next five years. Moreover, by 2000, about 30 per cent of the world's civilian air fleet will be 25 years old or more.

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Flexible labour policy no aid to jobs – OECD

Larry Elliott

BRITAIN'S much vaunted flexible labour market locks workers into poorly paid jobs, helps entrench insecurity and has no impact on economic performance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is expected to announce next week.

In a move that will provide backing for the Government's reforms of the labour market, the economic think tank will report that many UK employees at the bottom of the wages ladder are trapped in a cycle of "low pay or no pay".

Trade unions and ministers are certain to seize on the findings of the influential study, which questions some of the main elements of free-market economic thinking over the past two decades.

Research by the 29-nation OECD will reveal that that there is no link between the level of trade union activity and overall economic performance. It could find no evidence that the existence of unions led to more unemployment or fewer jobs.

Moreover the OECD found that the lack of unions and the absence of collective bargaining were associated with a higher incidence of poverty pay.

De-unionisation, a less generous welfare state and the fear that the loss of a job may result in a loss of status and salary have meant that Britain's level of job insecurity has remained surprisingly high, despite the fall in official claimant-count unemployment from almost 3 million to little over 1.5 million since late-1992.

Labour market reform was a feature of the 18 years of Conservative rule, with both the Thatcher and Major administrations claiming that deregulation, privatisation, the erosion of employment rights and the scrapping of wages councils had enhanced the job and pay prospects of UK workers.

However, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, said last week that the economy's underlying rate of growth was unchanged at 2.25 per cent since 1979. He will use the OECD's findings to support his proposals for a radical attack on long-term and youth unemployment, paid for by the windfall tax on the privatised utilities.

Mr Brown has been anxiously monitoring the pound's steady rise towards three German marks since delivering his Budget last week, and is concerned that sterling's 20 per cent appreciation over the past 12 months will damage industry by making exports more expensive.

But he remains convinced that the welfare to work programme will provide the key to solving Britain's long-term unemployment problem.

Government sources said at the weekend that the OECD's authoritative annual Employment Outlook appeared to support the case for a more interventionist strategy. Ministers believe that the findings on the difficulties faced by workers in escaping from low-paid jobs add weight to the argument for the introduction of a minimum wage.

The Chancellor plans to make job creation the theme of next year's round of summits, when Britain has the chair both of the Group of Seven industrial nations and of the European Union. OECD labour ministers will start the process with a special meeting in October. This will be followed by a G7 jobs summit in London in early 1998, which will feed ideas into the annual gathering of the West's leaders in Birmingham next May.

Ministers believe that it is the overriding priority of the West to reduce unemployment, which currently stands at 36 million, and to find ways of helping the 20 per cent of workless households.

The OECD has been at the forefront of efforts to tackle unemployment since its wide-ranging jobs study in 1994. Although the think tank has in the past backed structural reforms of labour markets to reduce unemployment, the new report is believed to find no link between deregulation and earnings mobility.

Research showed that over a six-year study period UK employees who began under the EU poverty wage threshold stayed there for more than four years on average, a record worse than any other country apart from the United States.

Brown does a conjuring trick

Larry Elliott and **Michael White** look at Labour's first budget

THE UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, launched Labour's radical shake-up of the welfare state last week when he used his first Budget to seize £5 billion ($8 billion) from the privatised utilities to fund back-to-work schemes and conjured up an extra £3.5 billion for schools and the health service.

In a package designed to mollify business as well as the Government's traditional supporters, Mr Brown announced £5.9 billion of overall tax increases designed to prevent the recent spurt in the economy from turning into a boom-bust cycle.

He found a lucrative, backdoor way of raising revenue with the abolition of tax credits on dividends, a move that will hit pension schemes hard. The National Association of Pension Funds said the decision — which will reap more than £11 billion in three years — was "the biggest attack on pensions since the war".

But the Chancellor left his biggest surprise till last: the raid on the Government's contingency reserve to bail the national health service out of a cash crisis, and provide money for much-needed resources and overdue repairs to schools.

The NHS — which faced a standstill budget next year — will receive an additional 2.25 per cent. Although less than the average 3 per cent during the 18 years of Conservative rule, this was seen as enough to stave off a backbench revolt while being tough on public spending.

Education will also get an extra £1 billion from the reserve in 1998-99, and £1.3 billion from the windfall tax will fund "an immediate programme of capital investment" to provide schools with "the infrastructure, the technology, and the bright modern classrooms they need".

However, the bulk of the windfall tax will be spent on measures aimed at creating "the new welfare state for the 21st century". The young jobless, the long-term unemployed, single parents and the disabled will all be helped to find work.

After his Budget speech the Chancellor seemed to have won grudging acceptance from the privatised utilities for his one-off windfall tax, but the Confederation of British Industry responded angrily to the attack on dividends. "The CBI is disappointed that such a major change in corporate taxation was introduced without proper prior consultation," said director-general Adair Turner.

Mr Turner welcomed the 2 percentage point cut in corporation tax — taking it to the lowest ever recorded in the UK — but said any boost to investment would be offset by the change to the dividend regime.

Meanwhile London's City was braced for further increases in interest rates. Sterling soared on the foreign exchanges, rising to DM2.94 against the German mark, with City dealers convinced that imminent rises in interest rates from the Bank of England would ensure that any Budget respite for consumers would be short-lived.

Stamp duty on the sale of more expensive homes — those priced above £250,000 — was increased, but the markets were more interested to note that mortgage interest relief is to be cut from 15 per cent to 10 per cent next spring rather than abolished.

Smokers and drivers will also be targeted for extra taxes, but the impact on the consumer will be partly offset by the reduction in VAT on domestic fuel and power from 8 per cent to 5 per cent.

Pledging to weed out the four fundamental weaknesses of the British economy, the Chancellor said the Budget would provide stability, boost investment, reduce unemployment and improve opportunities for everyone.

Case for change . . . Brown with Leona Reid, one of the Rosyth dockyard apprentices who made the new Budget box PHOTO: DAVID GILES

However, the need to slow down the economy and reduce the budget deficit over the coming years meant that the tax burden would rise this year. Analysis by accountants Coopers & Lybrand showed that the impact of the reduction in mortgage interest relief, together with higher excise duties on petrol, tobacco and alcohol, would leave a married employed person on £20,000 a year £22.29 a month worse off next year. Those on lower incomes will lose a bigger share of their incomes than the rich.

Winding up his 61-minute debut as Chancellor, Mr Brown said he had produced a package designed to equip Britain for the challenges of the 21st century. "Previous budgets pursued the short-term interests of the few. This Budget advances the long-term interests of the many."

In addition to the widely trailed help for the under-25s and the long-term jobless, the package also included measures to assist lone parents and the disabled back into the labour market.

Some of the young people taken off benefit will be trained to provide childcare support, as well as making up squads of environmental workers whose jobs will include insulating lofts for the elderly. Mr Brown said that sitting at home doing nothing would no longer be an option.

The focus of the Conservative attack was the raid on tax credits paid on dividends, with shadow chancellor Peter Lilley dubbing it "the Robert Maxwell Memorial Budget".

The new Tory leader William Hague dubbed the Chancellor's debut a tax-and-spend Budget and, in a reversal of Labour's election campaign rhetoric, said that a single day had produced "17 Tony tax rises".

Tough regime, page 11
Comment, page 12

In Brief

THE gold price crashed to its lowest level since the 1970s amid rumours that banks were set to cut the link between the yellow metal and legal tender.

WOOLWICH, the fourth UK mutual to convert to a public limited company this year, exceeded expectations by soaring to a peak of 368.5p on its stock market debut and handed windfalls of at least £1,500 ($2,520) to 2.5 million people.

BRITISH TELECOM cleared a big hurdle in its acquisition of MCI, America's second-largest long-distance phone company, when the US Justice Department approved the $20.8 billion deal that would create the world's second-largest telecommunications company, behind AT&T.

HEALTH group Amersham International is to merge with Norwegian rival Nycomed to create a $3 billion group.

BRITAIN and France gave a huge boost to Eurotunnel by agreeing a licence extension that could see the troubled company running the Channel tunnel beyond the end of the next century.

WAR broke out in the troubled BSkyB boardroom as directors of Britain's dominant pay-television operator reacted angrily to comments from Rupert Murdoch that shares in the company had been overvalued.

CABLE & Wireless revealed plans to strengthen its position in the Pacific Rim by taking a controlling stake in Optus Communications, Australia's second largest communications operator.

THE British Post Office announced record profits of $970 million for the year despite last year's postal strikes.

A RECORD year of corporate financial activity for the N M Rothschild & Sons boosted the profits of its parent company by 66 per cent to $128 million.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates July 7	Sterling rates June 30
Australia	2.2052-2.2078	2.2199-2.2233
Austria	20.67-20.69	20.39-20.41
Belgium	60.61-60.66	59.78-59.88
Canada	2.3149-2.3169	2.2049-2.2971
Denmark	11.18-11.19	11.03-11.04
France	9.90-9.91	9.76-9.77
Germany	2.9381-2.9405	2.8988-2.9014
Hong Kong	13.03-13.04	12.88-12.89
Ireland	1.1029-1.1071	1.1021-1.1042
Italy	2,863-2,866	2,830-2,833
Japan	189.20-189.41	190.32-190.58
Netherlands	3.3068-3.3093	3.2591-3.2637
New Zealand	2.4951-2.4369	2.4840-2.4573
Norway	12.27-12.29	12.17-12.19
Portugal	296.38-296.59	292.39-292.73
Spain	248.08-248.35	244.61-244.92
Sweden	12.98-13.00	12.85-12.87
Switzerland	2.4519-2.4547	2.4250-2.4276
USA	1.6842-1.6850	1.6638-1.6648
ECU	1.4931-1.4945	1.4751-1.4772

FTSE 100 Share Index up 206.1 at 4610.7. FTSE 250 Index down 4.4pt 4488.9. Gold down $1.75 at $318.00.

Loud and proud at 25

ON THE 25th anniversary of the annual Gay Pride festival tens of thousands of people last weekend marched through London in a blare of whistles and drums, *writes Victoria Clark.*

A quarter of a million — said to be the largest turnout yet — gathered on Clapham Common, to hear messages of support from Tony Blair, William Hague and Paddy Ashdown. Heritage Secretary Chris Smith spoke and the Pet Shop Boys topped the bill.

EastEnders star Barbara Windsor led the march in a shocking pink suit from an open-top Cadillac. Gay police, firemen and customs officers marched under their banners, among the gorgeously arrayed transvestites and underclad "leather queens".

Julian Howes, at the front of the march, in an orange tango dress and golden mules, was selling flashing wands for the gay pressure group Stonewall. "This is my 26th march [including one rehearsal march]. And HIV willing I'll see 26 more — though I'm on six to seven years at the moment," he said.

The Gay Liberation Front organised the first Gay Pride march in 1972, five years after homosexuality was legalised for consenting adults over the age of 21 and a decade before anyone had heard of Aids.

It was the scrag-end of the hippie era, the year Britain went decimal and astronauts took their first moon walk. Mr Howes was a long-haired, bell-bottomed 16-year-old in a state of high excitement at having been branded "a corrupting influence" for inviting a Gay Liberation Front activist to speak at his school in Tulse Hill, south London.

There were about 1,000 marching in a mood somewhere between defiant and euphoric, and he recalls "the stunned incredulity of most of the people watching. You only get that level of astonishment the first time, don't you?" — *The Observer*



And the bride came too . . . A record 250,000 marked the 25th anniversary of Gay Pride in London PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY HALL

EU alarm over British beef

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE European Commission last week accused Britain of "manifest inefficiency" in failing to prevent the export of hundreds of tonnes of beef, as British officials admitted they made only occasional checks at ports.

Amid mounting concern in Europe that UK beef has been reaching the Continent despite the 14-month, European Union-imposed worldwide ban on exports following the epidemic of BSE (mad cow disease), the commission disclosed that at least 1,600 tonnes has been exported to Holland.

There were accusations from MEPs that a criminal conspiracy, involving a Belgian beef "mafia", may be involved in disguising the source of the beef and claiming EU export credits for its onward sale.

German MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, who chairs the parliament's committee on mad cow disease, commented: "The latest fraud by a beef mafia is feeding off the subsidies."

The commission said that although 700 tonnes of beef had been seized by Dutch authorities, another 900 tonnes appeared to have been exported to Russia and Egypt with false documents suggesting it originated in Belgium.

Klaus Van der Pas, the commission's chief spokesman, said: "The export controls were manifestly inefficient. Whether it is the tip of the iceberg . . . or all of the iceberg, I just don't know."

News of the evasion of the export ban caused widespread concern in Europe, with Spain immediately banning beef exports from Belgium. British MEPs and commission officials are alarmed that the exports may jeopardise any early lifting of the ban, although the commission said there was no evidence it had been sold in the EU.

But officials said legal action might be taken against the British for failing to prevent the exports.

British officials in Brussels admitted thorough inspections of lorries leaving the UK are only made for random two-day periods each month; otherwise only "suspicious" ones were checked.

As increasingly bizarre stories surfaced, the French satirical and investigative magazine, Le Canard Enchaîné, claimed that "infected" beef carcasses were being exported from ports in Northern Ireland and that British troops stationed in the province were involved.

The magazine claimed that the inquiry was sparked by an anonymous telegram to Interpol warning that exports of beef contaminated with BSE were taking place from Bangor, Carrickfergus and Larne "by the good old method of contraband by moonlight".

● Burger King announced it is to follow McDonald's lead and put British beef back in its burgers.

Lada imports grind to a halt after 20 years

Clare Longrigg

CHEAP, ugly and reliable only for its frequent breakdowns, the Lada was the perfectly unfashionable family car.

But last week importers in Carnaby, Humberside, gave up the struggle to sell this most unappealing of vehicles. After more than 20 years, the Russian-built car will no longer be sold in Britain.

First imported in 1973, there were 2,374 sold by the following year. By 1986 the annual sales figure had risen to more than 21,000, breeding loyalty among owners amid general scorn.

Wiltshire police lent the car some credibility, or dented its own, when it bought a fleet of Lada Cossack all-terrain vehicles in 1990.

The car also found a friend in pensioner Bill Dales, who took delivery of his 24th Lada in 1992. "They keep going and they're roomy," he insisted.

But the car never managed to achieve the anti-fashion cult status of the Reliant Robin, and after a torrent of schoolboy jokes about its poor performance and glamourless appearance, the Lada's importer, Motor Vehicle Imports, has finally admitted defeat with the loss of 70 jobs.

Problems obtaining an American-made part to keep down exhaust emissions meant that Russian manufacturers AvtoVaz could no longer supply cars. However, the 100,000 surviving Lada owners in Britain will be still be able to obtain parts as well as services at UK dealers.

Some will not mourn the car's passing. One British woman had to have her new Lada fixed 27 times in three weeks. But many of the insults were blunted in 1989 when the company launched a 149mph Samara model.

One of the most cutting jibes came from BBC presenter, Jeremy Clarkson, who said manufacturers should equip every car with a brown paper bag with eye holes "so no one would spot you driving it".

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Left calls for rethink on Labour party shake-up

MOTIONS submitted for previous Labour party annual conferences, published about three months in advance of the event, were always a good guide to the mood of the rank and file and offered useful early-warning signals to the leadership about storms ahead.

New Labour, which hopes to avoid the comradely fratricide of the past, published this year's motions to coincide with the Budget, which overshadowed it with the happy result that it went largely unnoticed by the media. Some leftwingers complained of news management.

The same leftwingers are unhappy about a consultation paper called Party In Power, on which they will be required to vote at their Brighton conference in the autumn. This sets out the leadership's plans for further structural changes to the party and to the conference, mainly to avoid the noisy clashes of the past, in which Labour governments were seen to be permanently at odds either with card-carrying members or trade unions, and sometimes both.

Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) have tabled 100 motions on the plans, most of them criticising the intended restructuring as undemocratic, unrealistic, hasty and stifling debate. A central complaint is that the changes are being foisted on the party, and that members have been too busy fighting the election to have had a proper chance to consider them.

The conference still sees itself as the party's "policy-making" body but in the past two years has yielded fairly quietly to the ideas of the new leader, Tony Blair, in order to project an election-winning image of unity. Some constituencies now think that Party In Power is a step too far in the presidential direction.

The London constituency of Hampstead and Highgate complains that the restructuring would take control of the conference agenda away from the membership, and so upset the balance between the leaders and the led. More bluntly, Stockton North CLP argues that "rank-and-file members are simply being used to rubber-stamp Labour party policy".

Some lively debate is promised. Leftwingers, and perhaps trade unions, may feel that Labour's rock-solid majority in the Commons now allows them the freedom to voice pent-up feelings without being accused of rocking the boat.

SIX IRA men who had planned to black out London and the Southeast by wrecking the electricity supply network were jailed at the Old Bailey last week for a total of 210 years.

The court was told that the men — "an élite and dedicated group" — came from Ireland for the operation. After an intensive programme of surveillance, involving 200 police and intelligence officers, they were arrested in rented premises in London, which also contained all the trappings for bomb-making together with false passports, maps of the electricity grid, ladders and £24,000 in cash.

After a 12-week trial, each of the six men — Gerard Hanratty, Donald Gannon, John Crawley, Robert Morrow, Francis Rafferty and Patrick Martin — was sentenced to 35 years for conspiracy to cause explosions. Martin Murphy, who admitted membership of the IRA but denied knowing about the plot, was acquitted along with a Birmingham business man, Clive Brampton.

THE SCOTTISH islanders of Skye won a victory of sorts when they persuaded the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, to halve the price local people are charged for crossing the 570-metre bridge to the mainland.

The tolls, the most expensive in Europe, were reduced from £2.50 to £1.25 for a single crossing by car. Charges for commercial vehicles were reduced by 25 per cent to £18.95 and £11.45, respectively. But the cuts will only affect local users. Visitors by car will still have to pay £5.40, and coaches £38.50, to cross during the high season.

Many islanders did not want a bridge in the first place and — except in bad weather — were happy with the ferry service. Since it opened in 1995, more than 500 people have refused to pay the toll and face criminal charges. Campaigners say they will continue to fight until tolls are abolished completely.

A DIVORCE package of more than £10 million, thought to be the largest yet in a contested divorce, was awarded in the High Court to Lady Conran, the former wife of Sir Terence Conran, the style guru who became Britain's leading restaurateur. Before the case went to court he had offered £2.5 million, which he considered "perfectly reasonable" given that she had "an enormous amount of her own money".

Sir Terence, who is worth an estimated £80 million, said he thought the figure unbelievable, "just because she cooked a few meals now and again and wrote a few books. I taught her how to cook".

Mr Justice Wilson thought differently. He found that Lady Conran, Sir Terence's third wife, had not been given enough credit for her husband's business successes. Her energy was almost as prodigious as that of her husband, and her role as a cookery writer was important in creating a public perception that linked him with fine food.

Lady Conran, reckoned to be worth £5.7 million before the settlement, was allowed to keep homes in London and Dorset, and awarded a lump sum of £6.2 million, including £900,000 to buy a new property in France as she is a Francophile.

AS MANY as 80,000 racing pigeons were feared dead when a cross-Channel race — in celebration of the centenary of the British Homing Pigeon Society, the sport's governing body — was allowed to go ahead in spite of severe storms.

Some 90,000 birds were released but only 10,000 returned. Fanciers who protested at the loss of valuable birds — consistent winners worth thousands of pounds — complained that the race should not have gone ahead.

British courts set to judge human rights

Clare Dyer

BRITONS will soon be able to enforce their human rights in their own courts instead of having to make the long trek to Strasbourg, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, confirmed last week.

But ministers are split on how the European Convention on Human Rights should be incorporated into UK law. Lord Irvine, a strong defender of parliamentary sovereignty, is thought to favour the weakest model, based on the New Zealand bill of rights, under which the judges would have no power to alter acts of Parliament.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and his junior minister in the Lords, Lord Williams of Mostyn, are believed to want a stronger model based on the Canadian charter.

Under the New Zealand model, judges would be able to declare a statute in breach of the convention but would not be able to strike it down or change the legislation. It would be left to Parliament to change the law.

Lord Irvine said the Government will publish white papers setting out proposals for a freedom of information law and for incorporating the human rights convention. "It must not disturb the supremacy of Parliament," he said. "It should not put the judges in a position where they are seen as at odds with Parliament."

Incorporation will mean a right of privacy, at present non-existent under English law. Other convention rights, such as the right to life, liberty, a fair trial, and freedom of expression will also be enforceable in the UK courts. At present anyone claiming their rights have been violated has to exhaust remedies available in the UK before taking the case to Strasbourg.

Incorporation would make it possible for newspapers, for example, to argue in the UK courts that British libel laws stifle freedom of expression.

● The Blair government is enjoying the most blissful post-election honeymoon in recorded history following the most popular Budget in 50 years, according to a Gallup poll this week.

Labour's popularity as a whole has also risen since its victory on May 1, when it got 44 per cent of the vote. The number of those saying they would vote Labour has risen from 59 per cent last month to 61 per cent now, the poll for the Daily Telegraph found.

The poll also indicates how much work the new Tory leader, William Hague, will have to do to control his party — with 83 per cent of voters believing the Tories are divided.

Teachers welcome reform

John Carvel and Donald MacLeod

THE Government this week won the first round of its battle to raise standards in schools, when the teaching unions and local education authorities rallied to support a white paper promising hugely ambitious improvement targets and draconian penalties for underperformance.

Leaders of rival unions who often compete to find the most colourful criticism of ministerial initiatives welcomed proposals from David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, to determine how teachers should teach and to sack those not up to the job.

The unions — encouraged by the £2 billion fillip for education in last week's Budget and a government promise to celebrate the profession's successes as well as pillory its failures — said the white paper was "ambitious and refreshing".

Its proposals include stopping 16-year-olds leaving school at Easter before taking GCSEs, and allowing schools to appeal against an unfair inspection by the Office for Standards in Education.

The white paper goes some way to fulfil Mr Blunkett's promise to stop schools selecting pupils by testing academic ability or interviewing the parents. However, specialist schools will be allowed to give priority to children who show "the relevant aptitude", church schools will continue to assess religious commitment, and the future of grammar schools will be decided by parents.

Mr Blunkett said: "To succeed we need the commitment, imagination and drive of all those working in our schools and colleges if we are to set aside the doubts of the cynics and the corrosion of the perpetual sceptics."

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, hailed the white paper's commitments on class sizes, equitable funding and fair admissions policies.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "Combined with last week's Budget and the promise of more resources to come, it provides support, alongside the pressure of targets and league tables, which is urgently needed."

A resident of Garvaghy Road, Portadown, leaves voluntarily as an RUC riot squad moves in

Sound meets fury on road to nowhere

IF THE nationalist community living along the Garvaghy Road went to bed last Friday night feeling a quiet optimism that their campaign was about to bear fruit, the awakening could not have been more rude, *write Stuart Millar and David Sharrock.*

At 2.30am last Saturday the uneasy calm was broken by the shrill, continuous note of a residents' coalition siren, alerting locals that the security forces were on the move. The hundreds that piled from their beds into the street were relieved to discover it had been a false alarm. The barbed wire barricades laid around Drumcree parish church by Royal Engineers had reinforced speculation that the police would not force the parade down the road for the third year.

But within an hour scores of Royal Ulster Constabulary Land Rovers had sealed the road.

The confrontation, which had been simmering all last week, flared into violence. Hundreds of demonstrators threw a barrage of bottles, stones and petrol bombs. The response was swift and brutally effective. Troops fired rubber bullets while 1,000 police officers, in military-style fire-proof riot gear, dragged protesters from the road.

"This just proves that you can never trust what the English bastards tell you," said one woman. "This proves that the British state treats Catholics like animals." Privately, however, some people voiced relief that violence had been minimal compared with last year.

By daybreak, Garvaghy Road was in a state of siege, with locals pinned well back from the parade route. In contrast, an air of celebration accompanied the Orange parade when it set off from the Portadown District Orange Lodge shortly after 10am.

Passing through loyalist estates, marchers were greeted by large hand-painted banners. "One-way traffic — no turning. By order of Portadown Loyalists."

But when the parade turned the corner on to the Garvaghy Road, it was greeted by residents blowing whistles and banging dustbin lids. The parade, however, reached the end of the mile-long road without serious incident. But the violence resumed as the RUC and army attempted to withdraw.

Victims of teenage sex abuser can sue

Clare Dyer

FOUR children who were sexually assaulted by a teenage sex abuser being fostered by their family won the right this week to sue the council which made the placement.

The landmark judgment by Mr Justice Hooper makes a new inroad into local authorities' immunity from legal action over their statutory child care duties.

Essex county council, which had tried to have the case struck out, had argued that the council would be immune even if it knowingly placed an adolescent convicted of rape or robbery with a family, and even if a social worker had deliberately lied to the foster parents.

The ruling gives the three girls and one boy, who cannot be named, the go-ahead to bring a negligence claim against the council and against Anthony Golden, the social worker who placed the 15-year-old with the family. But the judge struck out their parents' claim for compensation for the post-traumatic stress disorder they developed after discovering the abuse. They were barred from claiming because they had not personally seen or heard "a horrifying event".

The children's father said: "I am really pleased that the kids' claims can go ahead. Maybe this might stop this sort of thing happening to other children."

The 15-year-old boy, named only as G, was placed with the parents, who were specialist adolescent foster carers, in April 1993, when their own children were aged between seven and 12.

They claim they had stipulated that they would not foster anyone who was known or suspected to be a sexual abuser.

The parents claim that the social worker, Mr Golden, knew that G had been taken into care at the age of 12 following an indecent assault on his younger sister, but lied to them.

In Brief

CALLS to legalise euthanasia were thrown out by doctors at their annual conference. They said it was the job of the medical profession to help patients rather than kill them. Earlier, they voted overwhelmingly for cannabis products to be made legally available for medical use.

THREE British teenagers on a school holiday were killed when their coach plunged down a ravine in the French Alps after sliding off a hairpin bend.

ASIAN people are more likely than other ethnic group to need kidney transplants because of a higher incidence of diabetes and high blood pressure. But they face a longer waiting lists because there is a shortage of Asian donors, says the National Transplant Service.

THE ROYAL Greenwich Observatory — a direct link with Newton, Halley and the birth of scientific navigation — is to merge with the Royal Observatory Edinburgh into a new UK Astronomy Technology Centre at Edinburgh.

THE BBC has defended an increase of nearly 20 per cent in director general John Birt's pay package, saying it was "modest" compared with other senior media executives.

A FLOCK of genetically-modified sheep near Edinburgh is being used in experimental treatment of human victims of emphysema. The sheep have been raised by scientists who developed Dolly, the world's first sheep cloned from a cell taken from another sheep's udder.

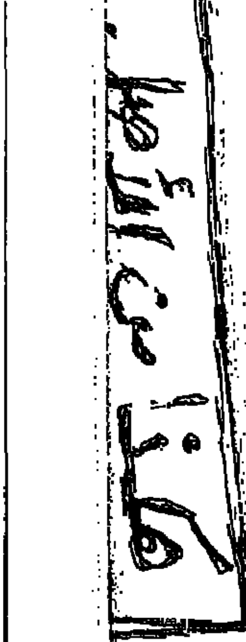
THE High Court has given anti-smoking campaigners the go-ahead to seek compensation via the courts against British cigarette manufacturers.

AMARTYA SEN, professor of economics and philosophy at Harvard university, has become Master of Trinity College, Oxford, the first Indian academic to head an Oxbridge college.

A THREE-DAY strike by British Airways cabin crews, over the imposition of a cost-cutting pay and conditions package, looked almost certain to go ahead this week after talks between BA management and unions broke down in acrimony. Further stoppages are likely.

FOUR Broadmoor patients have won a High Court injunction banning the top-security hospital from forcing all patients to undergo rubdown searches.

SIR JOSHUA Hassan, a long-serving minister in the British colonial service and Gibraltar's political leader for 42 years, has died aged 81.



Downey report damns Hamilton

David Hencke

NEIL HAMILTON, the disgraced former minister, was found guilty last week of taking up to £25,000 cash in brown envelopes from Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed, in a damning verdict on political sleaze from Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

The former Conservative MP for Tatton, who lost his seat at the general election, was comprehensively trounced by Sir Gordon for concealing cash payments, lying to the former deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, accepting undeclared lavish hospitality and unacceptable behaviour that "fell well below the standards expected of Members of Parliament".

In a simple statement Sir Gordon said: "The evidence that Mr Hamilton received cash payments directly from Mr Al Fayed in return for lobbying services is compelling; and I so conclude."

Alan Rusbridger, editor of the Guardian, welcomed Sir Gordon's findings. He said: "On October 1 last year we called Neil Hamilton 'A Liar And A Cheat'. That verdict is now official. Sir Gordon's report is a complete vindication of all the work by the Guardian over nearly four years. It is a detailed, thorough and damning demolition of every single lie that Neil Hamilton has spread during that period."

Sir Gordon's verdict finds Hamilton, former Northern Ireland minister Tim Smith, former government whip Michael Brown, and former Tory MPs Sir Andrew Bowden and Sir Michael Grylls all guilty of not declaring payments received either from Mr Fayed or lobbyist Ian Greer, who organised Mr Fayed's campaign against Tiny Rowland's attempt to regain control of Harrods.

The most serious condemnation is reserved for Hamilton and Smith, who finally admitted to Sir Gordon that he had also received £25,000 in cash in brown envelopes.

Hamilton is condemned for not declaring his two stays at Mr Fayed's expense at the lavish Ritz Hotel and private apartments in Paris; for failing to register payments and lavish hospitality from another Greer client, US Tobacco; for lying to Mr Heseltine about his payments from Greer; and for misleading ministers when lobbying to introduced the banned chewing tobacco Skoal Bandits into Britain.

In a damning quote, Sir Gordon adds: "There is a general obligation on members to the effect: 'If in doubt, register.' Mr Hamilton seems to have adopted the opposite principle and, if in doubt, gave himself the benefit of it."

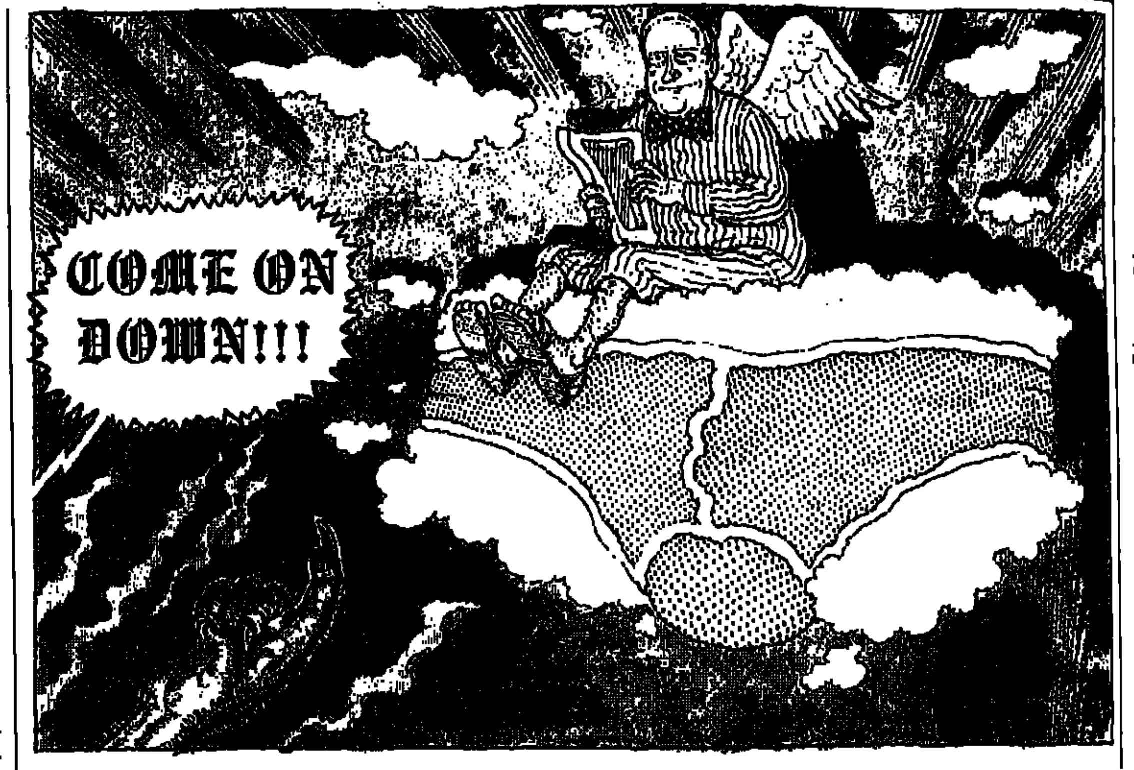
Hamilton and his wife, Christine, were clearly stunned by the findings. He said: "I'm extremely disappointed and devastated . . . I totally deny any dishonesty. The only evidence against me is from his [Mr Fayed's] paid employees . . . but he can't say when [the money] was taken and how much was taken, why it was given or where it went."

Smith was more contrite. He said: "I am very sorry that my conduct, as Sir Gordon Downey has described it, fell well below the standards expected of MPs. I can only say in my defence that it seemed less obvious at the time than it does with the benefit of hindsight what was the right course of action to take."

Hamilton, who last year abandoned a libel case against the Guardian, has 14 days to deliver his rebuttal to Sir Gordon's report. But he can expect a rough ride after such a meticulous investigation.

He later astonished Tory activists when, in response to calls for him to quit the party, he revealed he had never been a member. He claimed that as an MP he was not entitled to be a member of his local constituency association, and had not applied to join after losing his seat. MPs are automatically members of the party on election to Parliament.

Comment, page 12



Going to hell in their own way

POLITICAL SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

SCHADENFREUDE, unlike revenge, is a dish best eaten hot. Or so I remarked to a Labour MP as we waited for the Downey report on parliamentary sleaze.

All the MPs criticised have resigned or been thrown out. Where was the pleasure, I inquired, in watching the further humiliation of someone who had already fallen?

He disagreed. "What I say is, dig 'em up, kick their corpses around, stone 'em a few times, then bury them again."

Another Labour MP took up the theme: "What a shame Hamilton lost to Martin Bell," he said, "it would have been much more fun if he'd still been around."

Somehow the 898-page tome seemed to fall open at page 129 of Volume I ("the evidence . . . is compelling; and so I conclude") — "like those pages in Lady Chatterley," someone said.

Upstairs a committee room had been set aside for the former MPs who had been investigated by Sir Gordon. The idea was that they could read the charges before they were published. In the past a bottle of whisky and a revolver would have been provided too. Now handguns are illegal, and a gentleman who has lost his honour requires only a dry white wine and a press agent.

Hamilton declined to enter but he was near by. While MPs in the Chamber were debating the trivia of the Budget, he was in the real centre of British power: Four Millbank, home of all TV news political teams.

As we tracked him down, someone hissed: "Where's Christine?"

"She's outside talking to her lawyer, thank God," was the reply. Grown men who would have happily steered Lady Thatcher with a pat upon the backside are terrified of Mrs Hamilton.

Inside her husband was defending himself with an energy and enthusiasm which, whatever your view of him, you could only admire. Most of us are bad liars: nervous, bumbling and confused when we are caught out.

But Hamilton, like Jonathan Aitken and other serial fibbers, does so with conviction and élan. Having convinced themselves, they cannot quite comprehend that their belief does not communicate itself magically to the rest of us.

The great liars shift the charge from the one they ought to answer to the one they want to answer. He was asked about the way he represented Skoal Bandits chewing tobacco while failing to tell anyone that he did. Suddenly he was riding on a white horse: "I am a libertarian! I believe everyone should go to hell in their own way!" But of course that wasn't the question.

He left, his head aloft. Christine was downcast. "Do you mind?" she shouted at a reporter. No, he didn't. Schadenfreude. But they do mind, dreadfully.

Cabinet at war over Scottish devolution

Ewen MacAskill

TONY BLAIR was expected this week to be dragged in to mediate between warring Cabinet colleagues over plans for the creation of a Scottish Parliament in the biggest bust-up since Labour came to power.

Despite years of preparatory work on Labour's flagship constitutional reform, the confidential Cabinet committee dealing with it shows ministers deeply divided over the precise powers of a Scottish Parliament. Labour insiders described the twice-weekly sessions as "torrid".

The unexpectedly acrimonious issue that has left ministers deadlocked is whether Westminster or the new parliament in Edinburgh will have legislative power over abortion. It is a hugely sensitive issue which pits the Catholic hierarchy in Scotland against the Labour leadership and raises the spectre of cross-border abortions in the Irish manner if Scottish law were to be tightened.

Mr Blair's intervention follows battles within the committee over public spending in Scotland, the number of Scottish MPs sitting at Westminster after devolution, and a draft white paper considered "too Braveheartish".

In a series of clashes, the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, the Cabinet's leading anti-devolutionist, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, and the Agriculture Minister, Jack Cunningham, have formed themselves into an "English lobby", demonstrating hostility not only over the abortion issue but to central planks of the devolution plan.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, chairman of the committee, though himself a Scot, has sided with them against the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar. Labour insiders said the ministers had forced Mr Dewar "to jump through hoops".

Mr Dewar has been backed by the Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, and the Leader of the House, Ann Taylor.

Before the deadlock over abortion, the committee's fiercest battle in a series of skirmishes had been over public spending. Mr Straw and his allies pushed for a cut in the level of public spending in Scotland, insisting Scots receive too much compared with England.

But Mr Dewar has lost out over abortion. Insiders predict Mr Blair — who does not sit on the committee but has been called in to adjudicate — will back the "English lobby" and insist that responsibility for abortion should remain with the Westminster Parliament.

The white paper setting out details of the Scottish Parliament will be published later this month and form the basis for a referendum in Scotland in September.

Although Mr Dewar is said to be on course to deliver most of Labour's manifesto pledge on devolution, he has been bruised and will be open to criticism over abortion from Labour's nationalist wing as well as the Scottish National Party and the Roman Catholic Church.

He argued on the committee that Labour had promised to transfer all powers to a Scottish Parliament other than foreign affairs, defence, immigration, social security and macro-economics. A failure to transfer power over abortion would be seen as reneging on that pledge.

Lords defeat for Labour

Michael White

THE LABOUR government last week sustained its first defeat when Conservative-led peers voted to amend the Referendum Bill so that Scotland and Wales would have to stage their referendums on the same day.

The defeat by 101 votes to 94, which flies in the face of government policy, was immediately condemned by the leader of the Lords, Lord Richard. Though MPs will reverse it in the Commons, it raised the prospect of a constitutional row because the decisive votes were cast by hereditary peers under sentence of constitutional extinction.

The two days of the committee stage of the Referendum (Scotland and Wales) Bill were marked by manoeuvrings by Tory peers, who dislike the bill for both its content and its haste, but who are jittery lest they give Labour a perfect excuse to bring forward Lords reform.

Labour and Liberal Democrat peers had accused the Tories of deliberately losing a vote — by 91 to 131 — which would have given Scots voters one ballot paper instead of two, to vote on both the principle of an Edinburgh assembly and its tax-raising powers.

Lord Richard argued that Wales needed a separate polling day — provisionally September 25, two weeks after Scotland expects to vote — to prevent its public debate being overshadowed.

Some MPs believe the true reason is momentum: if Scotland says "Yes", wavering Welsh voters may bury the doubts which made them vote "No" by four to one in 1979.

So twitchy are both sides at Westminster that ministers have effectively banned their own backbenchers in the Lords from tabling amendments to the bill.

Though he enjoys a 179-seat Commons majority, Tony Blair is still vulnerable in the Lords, where 490 life and hereditary peers take the Tory whip against 126 Labour and 55 Lib Dems. The balance of power lies with the 324 crossbenchers and 108 assorted independents.

Labour's manifesto committed it to removing voting rights of hereditary peers as soon as possible.

Miscarriages of justice under review

Duncan Campbell

A YOUNG man who was jailed in 1993 for killing a three-year-old boy by smashing his head with a golf club last week had his conviction quashed.

Paul Esslemont, who has frequently been beaten up in prison for being a child-killer, wept in the dock as the Court of Appeal announced its decision.

Mr Esslemont, aged 21, from Coventry, was convicted at Birmingham crown court of the manslaughter of Carl Kennedy, and was jailed for eight years. It had been alleged that he lost his temper with the boy, half-strangled him and struck him about the head 15 times with a golf club.

After an unsuccessful appeal in 1994, Mr Esslemont's case was taken up by the BBC's Rough Justice programme. In it, pathologist Bernard Knight cast doubt on the evidence that had indicated that a golf-club had delivered the blows.

Mr Esslemont, who had no previous convictions, was charged with murder after police found bloodstains on his shoes and golf club. Fresh evidence suggested the stains could have been the result of his search near the area where the body was found.

In his judgment, Lord Justice Leggatt said that as it was now accepted that all of the injuries could not have been caused by the club, either another weapon would have had to be used, or all the injuries were inflicted with another weapon.

The judgment said Mr Esslemont would have had 10 or 15 minutes at most to carry out the killing and go back to his home, before returning a borrowed golf ball to his neighbour. "Yet there is no evidence that anybody saw anything amiss," said Lord Justice Leggatt.

Meanwhile Gilbert "Danny" McNamee, who was jailed for 25 years for the 1982 Hyde Park IRA bombing, in which four soldiers and seven horses were killed, has had his case referred back to the Court of Appeal as a result of new evidence. It is the first case to be referred back by the new Criminal Cases Review Commission.

The main evidence against him was fingerprints on adhesive tape found with bomb-making equipment at the caches. In his defence it was claimed that he could have handled the tape innocently before it was used to make bombs.

Three young men jailed for life nine years ago are now hoping they will become the third high-profile alleged miscarriage of justice case to be reopened within a week.

Lawyers acting for the men believe they have sufficient new evidence for the case to be referred to the Court of Appeal.

On October 12, 1987, newsagent Philip Saunders was viciously battered with a spade outside his Cardiff home. Five days later, he died of his injuries.

At first, the chief suspect was a man seen by a witness in the area, described as 6ft with dark curly hair, wearing a blouson-type jacket.

The three men charged were Darren Hall and Ellis Sherwood, both then aged 18 and petty criminals, and Michael O'Brien, then 19, who had no record. All three were of slight build and about 5ft 5in tall.

Welfare to work gets tough

Seumas Milne and Richard Thomas

YOUNG dole claimants who refuse to take up any of the jobs or training options offered under the Government's welfare to work deal announced in the Budget will lose all their benefits, ministers announced last week.

Revealing the unexpectedly tough regime David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, rejected claims that the penalties were "draconian", and insisted the sanctions simply linked rights with obligations.

The New Deal is intended to be the Government's flagship jobs and training policy, designed eventually to take some 250,000 18- to 25-year-olds off the dole and put more than half the long-term unemployed into subsidised jobs or training.

The £3.5 million programme aims both to cut the claimant count and to increase the employability of some of the most excluded of the jobless. But advisers are acutely aware that the schemes could be swamped by job losses if the economy goes into a sharp downturn and unemployment builds up again.

They are hoping that a mixture of higher taxes announced in the Budget, and modest interest rate rises, will produce a "soft landing" rather than a deep recession. But signs of a consumer-led boom added to fears that the Bank of England may raise interest rates again this week to clamp down on the economy. The Confederation of British Industry said that retail sales remained buoyant last month, leading analysts to suggest that interest rates may rise to 8 per cent by the end of the year.

The sanctions regime for the under-25s who refuse to take part in the New Deal programme is essentially the same as that introduced as part of the Tory government's Job Seeker's Allowance last year.

After a four-month "gateway" induction period, when they are to be given a crash preparation course for entry into the labour market, the young unemployed will be presented with several options: a private-sector job with a wage, for which the employer gets a £60-a-week subsidy and a training organisation gets £750 for one-day-a-week training; work with a voluntary organisation, or with an environmental task force, on benefits plus a £400 grant; or full-time education or training.

If they refuse to take up any of the options without "good reason", all benefit will be withdrawn for two weeks, four weeks and then indefinitely. As under the JSA, the penalty will only be a 40 per cent loss of benefit if the claimant is deemed "vulnerable" — for example if he or she has dependants or is pregnant.

Andrew Smith, the employment minister in day-to-day charge of the New Deal schemes, said the penalties were "tough but fair".

Verdict: Guilty as charged

IT BEARS saying again: British public life is amongst the least corrupt in the world. We have no Bettino Craxi, Gianni de Michelis or Bernard Tapie here; no Mafia, no pork barrel. The sums involved in Westminster corruption make the Americans, the Spanish and even the Irish laugh. The great majority of MPs have always been honest, decent and hard-working. But this bears saying again, too: there was in the late eighties the beginnings of a significant culture of corruption at Westminster. A small group of politicians began to get a sniff of the rich pickings that were dangled before them by the lobbying companies. It was not corruption on a vast scale, but it was not nothing, either; and the complacent sneers of MPs and commentators as the villains were exposed over the past four years did no favours to the cause of honest politics in this country.

Now there is an official verdict, and that verdict is: Guilty as charged. Men who rose to hold the highest positions in British political life took secret sums of money to represent in Parliament a company under the threat of investigation by the Department of Trade and Industry. They took gifts, holidays and cash. They did their best to cheat the Inland Revenue. They charged their own constituents to represent them. They concealed their gifts, their holidays and their money from their own colleagues and from the voters. They lied to the press, they lied to their colleagues and lied to their superiors. When cornered, Neil Hamilton lied more elaborately and more viciously. Like Jonathan Aitken, he smeared his accusers and, repellently, sought to destroy careers. In this, he found willing accomplices in Parliament and even in some areas of the press.

All this, and more, is chronicled in Sir Gordon Downey's door-stopping 896-page report, published last week. Lord Salmon, who chaired a Royal Commission on Standards of Conduct in Public Life in 1974, wrote: "Corrupt dealings are secretive. Few, if any crimes, are harder to prove." There can be no doubt that Sir Gordon has done just that in a meticulous work of great care and balance. Mr Hamilton has the right to protest, and protest he inevitably will. But it was he who chose Sir Gordon, having failed in the courts. It is apparent to all that he is finished in public life, and it would be better for him quietly to come to terms with that finality.

This whole affair was the result of the failure of self-regulation. It was the work of the press and the press alone that led to the creation of the Nolan committee and the subsequent reforms. Sir Gordon's work would in all likelihood have been impossible without access to mountains of documents obtained on discovery through the courts; without the fruits of months of work by Guardian reporters and without the newspaper spending tens of thousands of pounds in legal fees to assist him.

It would be better in future for cases of this complexity and size to be dealt with by a Tribunal of Inquiry. It is also right that future Hamiltons and Smiths should not be able to hide behind parliamentary privilege, but should be prosecuted in the criminal courts. In any event, the rules should be changed to allow Sir Gordon to publish his own report rather than depend on a nod from the Standards and Privileges Committee or to be frustrated by a prorogued Parliament. And one final thing: can we please reform Britain's libel laws?

Nato's eastern promise

IT IS AN illusion that there is always a choice between a good and a bad course in international politics. Frequently, as with the decision to enlarge Nato, there would be difficulties whichever choice was made. What is certain is that if a choice once made is later reversed, nobody benefits from the resulting confusion and perception of weakness. As the members of the alliance gather in Madrid this week, there are critics, mainly in the United States, saying that the move to extend membership to some eastern states is a historic mistake. Their position was an honourable one before the die for expansion was cast, but is now less tenable. A Nato that had decided not to incorporate any eastern members would be one thing. A Nato that has decided to bring them in, and does so, would be another. But a Nato which so decided, and then failed to do so because of a defeat in the legislature of its most important member state, would be another article altogether. A busted flush, perhaps.

To say that the expansion of Nato is an illogical business is fair comment. The expected invitation to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic will bring in three states whose military establishments are in a state of disarray. It will be years before they can bring more than limited contingents up to top Nato standards. Even so, they will have to spend a great deal of money, money on which the United States arms industry has already fixed a sharp eye. So expansion will not strengthen Nato militarily and will weaken the economies of new members. The arguments between the US and France over whether Romania and Slovenia should be part of the first wave have, meanwhile, opened up another fault line in the alliance. Further, as the critics point out, expansion stretches the alliance strategically and has offended the Russians, although not so far as deeply as was once feared. Why then has it been decided to do it?

The reason Nato is expanding is that eastern European countries pleaded, begged, argued, lectured, and hammered on the door. Could we really have just said No? Their enthusiasm may now have cooled somewhat, as they contemplate the costs, but they still want to join. The reasons include their fear of Russia, and also their fear of themselves, of the conflicts they might generate if their armed forces were not locked into an alliance managed in a sophisticated way by powerful states. Above all, admission to Nato and the European Union remains central to their aspirations to become truly European, Western, democratic, and "modern". This may seem a strange freight for a military alliance to bear, but Nato has never been a simple military alliance. It is, and remains, a complex political structure discharging many functions, some in mysterious ways.

Gordon Brown's tour de force

THE Labour government's first Budget for 18 years is a tour de force, even though there must be doubts whether enough has been done to puncture the consumer boom. Gordon Brown delivered it with unremitting gravitas, gathering together all the themes he has so consistently espoused in recent years, and more. Against the austere backdrop of a sharp fiscal tightening he managed to fire a salvo of micro-economic measures that delighted Labour MPs and lots of interest groups. It was a Budget for big and small business, for investment, for filmmakers, for training, for welfare to work, for single mothers, for savers and for housebuilding if not house owning. And — dropping unexpectedly out of the sky at the very end of the speech — an extra £1.2 billion for the health service and £1 billion for schools (plus another £1.3 billion phased over five years). No one on the government benches seemed to worry about the disingenuousness of these last measures since, though funded from the contingency reserve, they clearly breach departmental ceilings on which Mr Brown had inadvisedly put a cap. Nor did anyone worry that the new 2.25 per cent rise in national health service spending next year is less than the 4 per cent rise the Conservatives had implemented during the last four years. When you are expecting nothing, anything is welcome.

Mr Brown certainly intends to be an iron chancellor. He is raising taxes (including the one-off windfall on utilities) by £5.9 billion this year, £6.6 billion next year and £5.2 billion the year after. By the end of next year the Budget deficit will be down from £22.5 billion to only £5.5 billion. Of course merely planning something doesn't make it happen. Remember, the first Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Conservatives promised something similar in 1981, but it didn't materialise. But that doesn't alter the courage with which the new Chancellor is tackling the excessive borrowing requirement he inherited. He is taking enough money out of the economy: the only question is whether he is taking it out of the right places. Mr Brown has done well in dismal fiscal circumstances to start rebuilding the pillars of the welfare state from a position of ongoing erosion. The only qualification is whether he has done enough to dampen consumer spending. If the Government doesn't get the short term right then its estimable emphasis on the long term could be jeopardised.

No place for Abacha's phoney democracy

Martin Woollacott

THE GRIM comedy of Nigerian politics lurched onward last week with the announcement that elections due soon are to be put off until next year. The reason for the postponement of the second set of polls in a series culminating in a presidential vote next year and a return to full civilian rule is unclear. But it is of a piece with other switches and subterfuges that have characterised General Sani Abacha's programme for the restoration of democracy.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was due to meet in London this week to discuss what recommendations on Nigeria it should put forward to the heads of state when they meet in Edinburgh in October. This is the first meeting of the group, set up in Auckland when Nigeria was suspended from the organisation after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow defendants.

Nigeria is shaping up to become a critical test, perhaps the critical test, for the new British government's ethical foreign policy. The reason is that UK interests and responsibilities are far more significant and central in the Nigerian case than they are, say, in that of Indonesia. Nigeria's British connections are still substantial. A partly British corporation, Shell, is involved in the industry which sustains the regime. Britain is host to the Commonwealth summit later this year, which means it will be expected to take a lead in this as in other matters.

Nigeria is under military rule and ought to be extricated from it. But the problem is larger than that, since a number of Nigerians of stature fear that a few more years of army government or of rule by a fraudulent "civilian" government controlled by a military clique will undo the nation itself. Men like the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka believe that the idea of Nigeria, which once attracted the loyalty and the idealism of most of its citizens, has become so eroded by the years in which the generals have exploited and divided the people that "we may actually be witnessing a nation on the verge of extinction".

The individuals and the groups that carry a country politically have been bribed, intimidated and co-opted on the one hand, and killed, imprisoned and exiled on the other. There must be a limit to the endurance of this human fabric. Soyinka's fear that a country can wear out its nationhood, that it can be made "good for nothing", underlines the fact that Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth are not dealing here with just an episode, or even with a settled pattern of bad behaviour, but with a developing tragedy.

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, has already declared that Nigeria has not taken the steps toward a restoration of democracy that would warrant the lifting of its suspension from the Commonwealth. A few months ago there was a possibility that the regime's various cosmetic moves might just produce a Commonwealth constituency for restoring its membership. But there is now no chance of the suspension being lifted, so the Foreign Secretary is not being particularly forward in so proclaiming. The real question is whether, as Nigerian opposition groups demand, Nigeria should be expelled, or credibly threatened with expulsion at the Edinburgh meeting.

The facts since Auckland, where Commonwealth states committed themselves to expulsion if there was "no demonstrable progress" in the next two years, are damning. The regime did announce a three-year transition plan, with the army bowing out completely in October 1998. But the institutions set up as part of the transition process, notably the National Electoral Commission, are dubious. The commission has authorised five political parties, which issue uncannily similar pronouncements urging Abacha to stand for the presidency next year. They are stooges or, at best, co-opted elements. The regime has not talked to the real opposition and has continued to harass and detain its leaders. Those in detention include Chief Abiola, the winner of the 1993 election which the military cancelled when their candidate, in spite of all their efforts to fix the result, unexpectedly lost. They also include more than 40 people held for an alleged coup attempt that few believe actually happened, and some opposition personalities picked up more recently. The government has released a handful of detainees, but arrested more. Some idea of the undemocratic nature of this "return to democracy" can be gained from the fact that the laws governing the transition to democracy set fines and prison terms for anyone who criticises the process.

IT IS truly bizarre that Nigeria is supposedly rescuing democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The regime has undoubtedly gained a little credit for its regional operations, particularly in Washington, and there are reports that the US State Department is reviewing its Nigerian policies, with some arguing for a marginally softer line. But in general, the regime's efforts to end its isolation have a desperate and sometimes comic character. In the oddest case of all, General Abacha recently attended the Francophone summit, weirdly claiming that French would from now on be a national language of Nigeria.

Expulsion is not a likely outcome of the Edinburgh summit, unless the regime commits some new outrage or unless Nigeria effectively expels itself, as Pakistan and South Africa once did, by withdrawing. Expulsion would strain a Commonwealth in which there remain racial and ideological divisions and, in particular, resistance to the idea of forceful "Northern" meddling in "Southern" affairs. But between expulsion and a mere maintenance of suspension is a broad area where various kinds of pressure and sanctions could be considerably tightened up. Many of the measures agreed at previous meetings of the Action Group, like various kinds of visa, educational and financial restrictions on senior members of the regime, have yet to be put into general practice.

The Commonwealth can be and should be tougher. Above all, it must avoid being drawn into endorsing, in a year's time, a mere change of mask by what would essentially be the same regime.

Le Monde

Somaliland tries to break out of isolation

Jean Hélène in Hargeisa

ALMOST 10 years after being battered by shelling, Hargeisa, capital of the Somaliland Republic, still carries the visible scars of that period — shattered buildings, razed schools, crumbling walls, and buildings riddled with bullet holes. On top of that are the land-mines that are still taking a toll among the people despite the best efforts of a team of British mine-clearing experts who have been working here for the past year and a half.

Somalia's former dictator, Siad Barre, set out to destroy Hargeisa after beating off the Issak rebels of the Somali National Movement (SNM), which briefly seized the city in June 1988. "It was worse than the German cities in 1945," recalled a city resident. "When I got back here in 1992 with my wife and children, who had been in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, we had to camp outside the ruins of our home for a fortnight until the mines were cleared in the neighbourhood."

But in this former protectorate of Somaliland — it seceded in 1991, 31 years after being reunified with Southern Somalia, which had once been an Italian colony — it is not just poverty that is holding back reconstruction. Murderous clashes between Issak subclans have long discouraged those who were prepared to invest in the country, if only to rebuild their own homes. However, since the end of the last conference in February — which enabled Mohamed Ibrahim Egal to be re-elected to the presidency after five months of costly negotiations among 300 delegates — reconstruction has picked up speed. People now consider the country, or at least its capital, stable.

For Egal, the priority today is to "sell Somaliland to the world community". He speaks of livestock breeding, fishing and agricultural development projects, but for the moment he is trying to cobble together a government, which is a tricky exercise in that he has to strike the right balance between the clans. He claims that the constitution is "one of the most liberal ever" and says he will ban only tribal- and religious-based political parties.

Not everyone in Hargeisa shares the official optimism. "In six years of independence, we have had two civil wars," said one man. "And the government still controls only half the country." Two years after the bloody fighting in the Burao region, the city is still deserted — and littered with land-mines — while its 100,000 residents camp out in the open country where they are being looked after by the humanitarian organisation Action Contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger). The Somaliland shilling, introduced in 1996, and already battered by inflation, is still not legal tender.

Corruption is another reason for the complaints often heard in Hargeisa or Berbera. "Where's the money that the government is collecting?" many ask as they try to estimate the total amount of the taxes imposed at the port of Berbera and collected from the imports of *qat*, which arrives daily from Ethiopia. "If this region were properly run, it would be prosperous," said a Western expert.

The authorities have to maintain an army of 25,000 men, far too large for a country with a population estimated at 1.7 million (just under 1 million have fled the region). But enrolling former militiamen in the regular army was the price that had to be paid to end the anarchy, even though their primary loyalties are still to their own clans.

The road linking Hargeisa and Berbera, which just two years ago had no fewer than 70 unofficial checkpoints, is now open — the only traces of the years of fighting that remain are the bridges destroyed by SNM guerrillas.

For the moment, the resentment against those living in the south is shared by most people, who hold all the Somalis responsible for the terrible repression that they suffered. Nevertheless, some readily admit that when resentments finally disappear "maybe 30 or 40 years from now, it'll be time to think of a new north-south union, but with solid guarantees of even-handed treatment".

(July 3)

DJIBOUTI
Hargeisa
ETHIOPIA
SOMALILAND
SOMALIA
Indian Ocean
Mogadishu
400km

Aztec Sphinx battles on

Bertrand de la Grange in Mexico City

A PSYCHOLOGICAL profile drawn up by an agency specialising in executive headhunting describes Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, the leftwing Democratic Revolution party (PRD) candidate for mayor of Mexico City in the July 13 election, as "tenacious, methodical and dogged", in addition to being "remote" and "unflappable" in the face of adversity.

Indeed, it has required a good deal of tenacity to stand up to the hostility of a government that has never forgiven him for breaking with the Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI) in 1987 and running for the presidency the following year.

This "betrayal" is all the harder for his former associates to stomach as Cárdenas is the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, the most popular of Mexico's former presidents, who ran the country from 1934 to 1940. While in office he nationalised the oil industry and gave new life to the agrarian reform decreed in the wake of the 1910 revolution.

Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas was elected to the senate in 1976, and four years later became governor of Michoacán, his family's home state.

His governorship is a source of much controversy. His followers are grateful to him for distributing land to poor peasants, introducing the teaching of native languages in schools and helping to reduce incidences of drunkenness by closing down many taverns. His opponents, on the other hand, criticise him for misusing his authority and practising cronyism, charges levelled at many other PRI governors.

However, his former constituents don't seem to bear any grudge; indeed a large majority of them have been continuing to vote for him since he quit the PRI.



Cárdenas . . . learned to smile

In 1986, Cárdenas and a handful of PRI officials set up a "democratic wing" of the party in the belief that the "technocrats", elected at the beginning of 1982, had drifted away from the "values of the revolution". Running for the presidency in 1988 as the candidate of the Democratic National Front, a coalition of four small leftwing parties, Cárdenas was believed to have won. However, the PRI's Carlos Salinas de Gortari was finally declared president, amid claims by Cárdenas that he was the victim of an "enormous fraud".

In 1989, he founded his own party, the PRD, which was joined by an ever-increasing number of defectors from the PRI, the leftwing opposition and, in particular, former communists. In the 1994 election, Cárdenas suffered a severe defeat, gaining barely 16 per cent of the vote.

But far from being discouraged by the setback, he patiently built up the PRD, toned down his public rhetoric and, without abandoning his severe image as the "Aztec Sphinx", has learned to crack an occasional smile — which currently adorns his campaign posters in Mexico City.

(July 5)

Middle East peace at risk

COMMENT
Mouna Naïm

EVERYBODY agrees that since the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations broke off after Israel began building the Jewish settlement at Har Homa, the Middle East peace process has been in peril.

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein have spoken of their concern to France's President Jacques Chirac. But for the moment only Egypt has made concrete proposals to bring Israel and the Palestinians together. But its efforts ran up against the Israeli government's unacceptable position that it was willing to suspend building of the settlement for four days (during a religious holiday) if the Palestinians agreed to resume peace talks.

The French president realises the gravity of the situation. Following his meeting this week with the chairman of the Palestine Authority, Yasser Arafat, he said that France was quite worried about the possibility of "uncontrollable terrorist acts" taking place, the effect of which would be to "destabilise not only the region, but also the United States and Europe". He said that it was "up to both the United States and Europe to do everything possible to get the peace process back on track".

This is not yet another effort by Chirac to involve the European Union in the Middle East peace process, where the US has set itself up as the sole arbiter. Paris believes that Washington should be encouraged to stop playing its waiting game. The EU, banished to the sidelines, has done everything in its power to get Israel and the Palestinians to sit down to talks. But the diplomatic efforts of its special envoy in the Middle East, Miguel Angel Moratinos, have produced no results. His chances of success are practically nil so long as Washington does nothing.

The EU sent the US a 10-point proposal to break the deadlock. Washington merely acknowledged receipt of the plan. In Paris this week, Arafat suggested that Europe use its economic muscle against Israel. It is a tall order. At the recent summit in Amsterdam France had great difficulty getting its 14 EU partners to adopt a simple statement inviting the "peoples of the Middle East to join with the peoples of Europe to build a harmonious future" and urging the "Israeli and Palestinian leaders" to get things moving again.

The declaration also appealed to the "Israeli people" not "to rule out the possibility of a [Palestinian] state".

The Denver Group of Seven Plus One talks were more evasive than the Amsterdam meeting. There the participants simply pledged to give "peace a new momentum". President Bill Clinton followed this up by promising to do "everything reasonably possible to prevent the peace process capsizing". And he told Chirac that he was considering certain ideas, but has so far not revealed what he intends to do.

"The idea of peace is disappearing in people's minds," said Saëb Erakat, the chief Palestinian negotiator and minister of local government. "The United States is very skilled in crisis management diplomacy. How many more people should die for President Clinton to make a move?"

(July 2)

Teenagers' racism shocks older Swedes

Benoît Peltier in Stockholm

"HAVE we told our children, have we explained clearly enough to them that this must never happen again?" It was a shocked and grave-faced Göran Persson, prime minister of Sweden, who put that question to members of parliament. "This" was the Holocaust.

Persson was commenting on the "disturbing" conclusions of a survey of teenage racism conducted among 8,000 Swedish schoolchildren aged between 12 and 18. It revealed that only 66 per cent of the children polled declared they were quite certain that the Nazis exterminated 6 million Jews during the second world war. This is a lower percentage than in other European countries, says the team that conducted the survey, which was commissioned by the Social Democratic government.

Some of the other findings have also prompted embarrassed reactions: only 47 per cent of the pupils were prepared to concede that "democracy is the best way of governing Sweden", 8 per cent disagreed, and the rest said they had no opinion. More than 12 per cent of the secondary school children admitted to having listened to neo-Nazi music on several occasions, and one in 10 considered "the mixing of races is a crime against nature". Finally, 12 per cent thought that "Jews have too much influence in the world today".

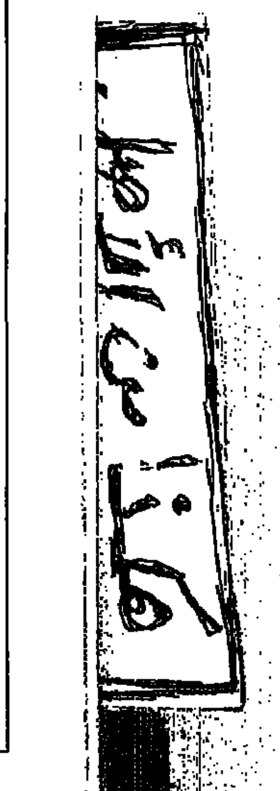
While politicians and experts refuse to believe that even a significant minority — let alone a majority — of Sweden's young people have fallen prey to racism, they acknowledge that there are gaps in the country's education system. The prime minister has announced that a campaign will be launched to give Swedish families more information about what happened during the second world war.

Sweden's Jewish community believes that "memory is the best defence against hate and xenophobia". The poll results have to be seen in the light of that comment. Because of Sweden's traditional policy of neutrality, the country was spared the horrors and the suffering of the war, noted Stephane Bruchfeld, one of the authors of the survey. The teenagers polled had, therefore, never heard their grandparents talk about these things.

The concessions made to the Germans and the business deals concluded with them during the war have been quickly forgotten. It was only after the Swiss recently began taking a long, hard look at their wartime behaviour that the Swedes have (re)discovered that their country had not been blameless. Sweden, for example, exported iron ore to Germany to keep Berlin's war machine going, and its central bank accepted gold stolen from the Nazis' victims as payment.

The optimistic expectation is that the publication of this survey will make a positive contribution to the current debate on racism and the integration of immigrants in a country that has no equivalent of France's extremist National Front.

(July 3)





Dance through Khmer tragedy

Catherine Bédarida

WHEN the Khmer Rouge, headed by Pol Pot, took the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, in April 1975 Em Theay was a dancer and respected teacher. By 1979, the year which saw the fall of a regime that had caused the death of millions, almost none of Cambodia's dancers were still alive.

It took Theay several days to make her way back to the capital on foot. She was able to save her treasure — three books of songs and musical scores, as well-bound as bibles — by hiding them at the bottom of her bags.

She then got together with a handful of survivors in premises near the shattered National Theatre building. "After all the forced labour we'd done, our hands were like peasants' hands," Theay remembers. Sophisticated hand movements are an essential element of classical Khmer dance.

She found a damaged theatrical mask in the street. "I offered up a prayer to it and got my son to mend it," she says. The masks, costumes and musical instruments used in classical dance had all been dispersed.

More serious was the fact that the repertoire itself was in danger of being lost: there existed no written codification of the choreographies. But a few temple sculptures and the great fresco that adorns the surrounding walls of the Silver Pagoda, near the Royal Palace, represented dance scenes.

Artisans and musical-instrument makers were able to refer to them when repairing or recreating masks and instruments. But only the surviving dancers, who remembered how they used their bodies, made it possible to reconstitute the dance movements. According to Khmer tradition, women play almost all roles, including those of men.

"Several elderly dancers knew each dance character. In the course of their day-to-day teaching, they managed to remember bits and pieces of songs and dances, then the whole repertoire came back to them," says Proeung Chhieng, dean of the choreographical arts faculty in Phnom Penh.

He was initiated into the art by his grandmother, who worked as a dance teacher for the ballet run by Prince Norodom Sihanouk's mother. From his birth in 1949 until the age of eight, he lived with his grandmother, accompanying her to the exercise room every day.

Chhieng and his sister were chosen by her as a gift to the queen. In the state religion, which combines animist, brahmanic and Buddhist influences, the royal family is the embodiment of gods on earth, and dancers, in their capacity as sacred intermediaries, honour them.

When Pol Pot seized power, Chhieng was separated from his family and forced to leave the capital, along with most of its inhabitants. When he returned in 1979 he learned that his sister had died.

In 1980, a ballet school was reopened. It soon had 500 children and teenagers as pupils, most of them war orphans. They each received a small government grant and, because they had no family, they boarded at the school.

Each morning the youngest pupils did hand exercises to make their joints more flexible. Later they learned dance movements. Eventually they each specialised in a particular role in the Ramayana, the great Hindu epic adapted by the Khmers in about the ninth century.

The Royal Arts University reopened in 1989. It had five faculties: music, fine arts, architecture, archaeology and the theatrical arts. This last faculty, which has 600 students, is now run by Chhieng.

In its early years, the faculty concentrated mainly on the technique of body movements in an attempt to reconstitute the repertoire. But it now stresses "the inner being, the serenity and the purity of the dancers," says Chhieng.

Their songs and dances have been recorded and preserved in the archives. In 1992, an Australian director, Sally Ingleton, made a documentary, The Tenth Dancer, about the school. It shows Theay teaching the precise and infinitely varied gestures of the hands, mainly to her best pupil, Sok Chea.

Theay, Chea, Chhieng and the Ballet of the Royal Khmer Academy — 40 dancers and musicians in all — are currently in France. After performing in Montpellier, they are due to dance at the Paris Quartier d'Eté Festival on July 15-18. It will be an exceptional opportunity for audiences to admire an ancient art that somehow managed to survive one of this century's greatest political tragedies.

(July 1)

Camera shy in Reims

Michel Guerrin

FOR nine years, the organisers of the Printemps de Reims photography festival fought tooth and nail to defend their event against all the odds.

A combination of unpredictable weather, a standoffish local population, occasionally substandard exhibition venues and, above all, a chronic shortage of funds meant that a handful of enthusiasts led by Gérard Talva had to move heaven and earth to keep the festival going.

There were no plans to celebrate the festival's 10th instalment (which continues until September 15), for it will be the last Printemps de Reims. The festival has been wound up because its organisers are now too battle-fatigued to keep it going, and also because there have been disagreements within Priorité Ouverture, the association that created the festival.

The atmosphere of gloom surrounding the festival's imminent demise has now been further tainted by an act of censorship prompted by the controversy over paedophilia that has swept France. Priorité Ouverture invited 12 of the 300 photographers who have exhibited at the Printemps de Reims in the past to show some of their hitherto *unseen or unpublished* work at this year's festival.

The 12 have now been reduced to 11. A few days ago, pictures taken by the Spanish photographer, Pere Formiguera, were censored by the city's neo-Gaullist mayor, Jean Falala. The photographs in question are 71 portraits of a boy taken against a neutral background. In the first picture, he is three, and in the last, 11.

The problem is that they are full-frontal portraits of a naked child. "In the present context, you can't show a boy with his genitals visible and not blurred," Falala explains. "This is the first time I have intervened in my 30 years as a politician. I loathe censorship, but it's my duty to protect kids. I believe these kinds of pictures may prompt certain individuals to act out their fantasies."

It so happens that a teacher of figure-skating in Reims has just been accused of paedophilia. "There's no connection," says Falala. "Unfortunately problems of this kind crop up all the time, in Reims as elsewhere."

The scandal has sharpened divisions within Priorité Ouverture. While some of its members indignantly point out that "you can't solve the problem by hiding pictures", others condemn the mayor's move but say that they "understand the political decision".

The pages in the festival catalogue where Formiguera's pictures were going to be published have been left blank. "It's to make it quite clear they have been censored," says Patrick Fabry, president of Priorité Ouverture. "We could have exhibited the photographs at a non-municipal venue," he adds, "but there would have been voyeuristic overtones."

Formiguera has decided not to travel to Reims. "I took the decision never to set foot again in my beloved city of Reims just as long as it is run by its present political leaders," he writes in a manifesto.

He also explains what his project is all about. For the past seven years he has been photographing 32 friends and members of his family, of both sexes *and all ages*. He will continue to photograph them at the rate of one picture a month until 2000. It is, then, a longstanding project that is still in progress. It has been shown in many European countries, and twice in Paris.

Contacted in Barcelona, Formiguera told Le Monde: "I thought it was all a joke. It wouldn't have surprised me in countries like the United States or Britain, but in France . . . No one condemns paedophilia more than I do, but to censor my pictures is to make the human body culpable. If you start attacking nude portraits of children, you have to call the whole history of art into question."

Formiguera's work will be discussed at the Rencontres d'Arles photography festival (till August 18), whose theme this year is, aptly enough, "Photography and politics".

(July 2)

In and out of love . . . Bardot and Charrier in 1959, but now squabbling in public about their marriage

Bringing Bardot to book

Marion Van Renterghem

Ma Réponse à Brigitte Bardot
by Jacques Charrier
Michel Lafon 344pp 125 francs

JACQUES CHARRIER, former French film star (best known for *his role in Marcel Carné's 1958 film,* Les Tricheurs), audacious film producer and now a painter, is normally a man of few words. But he has decided to break his silence and reply to an attack on him by his ex-wife, the pouting star who made the whole world jealous of him during their fleeting marriage.

Ma Réponse à Brigitte Bardot is Charrier's attempt to set the record straight after Bardot gave her version of their marriage in Initiales B B, published last year by Grasset.

We all have different ways of unbosoming ourselves, so to speak. Bardot hardly showed herself to advantage in Initiales B. B. She made no secret of her low opinion of the world in general, a world where mosques and minarets have replaced the "spires of our abandoned villages" and where "standards of behaviour have so deteriorated".

She was also scathing about some of the men in her life, including Charrier, her second ex-husband, and their son Nicolas. For 80 of the book's 560 pages they both get short shrift. Charrier is depicted as an egoist, an authoritarian profiteer and a failed actor, in short "a bourgeois down to his arsehole".

As for Nicolas, Bardot did everything she could to get rid of that "shapeless foetus". But he was born. "When I regained consciousness and realised it was my very own baby who was gently moving on me, I started screaming and begging for him to be taken away. I had borne him for nine nightmarish months, and I didn't want to see him again." She would have preferred, she said, "to have given birth to a dog".

Charrier is not someone who likes making a fuss. In the 37 years since their son was born, he has never until now made any reference in public to his youthful passion for Bardot. But this time he felt he had to speak his mind, since he failed to get the offending 80 pages excised when Bardot's book was published and was awarded only 150,000 francs ($26,000) in damages.

Meanwhile Bardot's broadside went on to become a best-seller; with 500,000 copies sold, it was Grasset's most successful book of the year. The harm had been done.

"I had no alternative," Charrier explains. "I wrote it for my children to re-establish the truth. If I were able to concentrate on my paintings I can assure you I would have gladly done without this kind of publicity." His publisher Michel Lafon, who specialises in "sensational" books, hopes it will sell 100,000 copies.

Charrier's tone is calm. He has no *bone to pick* with Bardot. He simply wants to say that they loved each other and that she was delighted when Nicolas was born.

In passing he refers to Bardot's "ideological leanings": the only thing she passed on to him from her parents' legacy was her father's library, which included works of Goebbels and Goering as well as an autographed copy of Hitler's Mein Kampf.

Bardot took out proceedings against Charrier and his publisher in an attempt to get his book withdrawn. On June 10, her case was dismissed.

(June 21)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

New world order . . . The Pathfinder lander camera shows two hills on the horizon of Mars's surface PHOTOGRAPH: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN

Mars Robot Set to Explore Red Planet

Kathy Sawyer in Pasadena

THE SOJOURNER, the first mobile geologist on Mars, nosed around the jagged Martian surface last Sunday with instructions to investigate its first target rock: a football-sized lump dubbed "Barnacle Bill."

The Pathfinder team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, running on euphoria and adrenaline as the mission's winning streak continued for a third day, worked exhausting hours to begin exploring Mars and analyze the accelerating torrent of incoming data and images.

The 2-foot-long, 1-foot-high rover Sojourner, which ventured slowly onto the Martian surface for the first time late last Saturday, "is the robotic equivalent of Neil Armstrong on the surface of Mars," said rover scientist Henry Moore. Pictures from the surface have revealed a geological cornucopia waiting at ground controllers' virtual robotic feet to be the subjects of the Sojourner's first-ever, on-site chemical analysis of Martian geology.

"There is a wonder to this landing site," said Peter Smith of the University of Arizona, lead scientist for the Pathfinder camera team.

Sojourner's activation came after ground controllers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory resolved a worrisome communication breakdown that had delayed the deployment.

For 12 hours, the glitch had marred an otherwise near-perfect performance by the spacecraft since it bounced in a cocoon of giant air bags to a safe landing on July 4 to begin the first exploration of Mars in 21 years.

Scientists hope a steady stream of scientific data sent back will eventually allow them to determine details about Mars, including the Red Planet's composition, how it was formed and what occurred in its history, including whether eons ago a great flood did indeed rush through the Ares Vallis site where Pathfinder landed.

Neither the Sojourner nor the lander is equipped to detect signs of life. But the $267.5 million mission is designed as the first of a series of expeditions that could eventually answer that question, which has been the subject of intense debate since scientists reported finding evidence of ancient primitive life in an asteroid from Mars discovered in Antarctica.

The 3-D color stereo camera aboard the Pathfinder lander has already returned spectacular images spanning the horizon, revealing a harsh landscape that is studded with a stunning array of rock formations.

Late last Sunday, ground controllers received confirmation that a tiny explosive had retracted a bolt, allowing the camera to pop up like a jack-in-the-box atop a mast to its full height, reaching an altitude of over five feet above the surface so it could take a more detailed portrait of the surrounding area.

This unprecedented high-resolution 3-D, stereo, color panorama, dubbed the "Monster Pan," will enable team members at mission control wearing special 3-D goggles to view the scene almost as if they were on the surface themselves. They can, in effect, look around and determine where each rock is and how big it is.

The $25 million, 23-pound solar-powered Sojourner, which moves at less than a half-inch per second, has three cameras, six spiked wheels, a unique suspension and a laser system, which will help the robot negotiate the treacherous terrain.

The rover analyzes the composition of rocks and soil with a special probe called the Alpha Proton X-ray Spectrometer. The device bombards the target with subatomic particles, and based on the nature of their bounce, reveals the composition of the object.

While the Sojourner began its exploration, the Pathfinder lander — which will takes stereoscopic, color pictures and study the atmosphere and weather for at least a month — settled into the Martian late summer at its equatorial landing site.

The lander's windsock and other meteorological sensors provided a report on the local weather: light winds gusting up to 10 mph (though they would feel to a human more like 1 mph because the atmosphere is only about one one-hundredth the pressure of Earth's), said Tim Schofield of JPL, leader of the meteorology team.

The temperatures overnight reached a low of minus 127 degrees Fahrenheit, he said, rivaling the coldest ever recorded on Earth (minus 128.8 degrees was recorded in the 1980s in the Antarctic). During the day, temperatures never rose above minus 8 degrees Fahrenheit.

China and Russia Top Nuclear Arms Sales

R. Jeffrey Smith

CHINA and Russia were the world's premier exporters of weapons of mass destruction or related technologies during the latter half of 1996, and assisted countries including Iran, India and Pakistan in developing ballistic missiles, poison gas weapons, or a capability to make nuclear arms, according to a CIA report to Congress released last week.

Using unusually blunt language, the unclassified six-page CIA report repeatedly pointed a finger at China and Russia and said that gaining their cooperation will be "key to any future *efforts*" to stop the proliferation of worrisome arms to rogue nations or provocative regions.

"The Chinese provided a tremendous variety of assistance to both Iran's and Pakistan's ballistic missile programs" during the period in question, said the report. It was completed last month by the CIA's Nonproliferation Center at the direction of the House and Senate intelligence committees and said it reflected a consensus view among government proliferation experts.

"China also was the primary source of nuclear-related equipment and technology to Pakistan, and a key supplier to Iran [of such nuclear equipment] during this reporting period . . . Russia supplied a variety of ballistic missile-related goods to foreign countries . . . especially to Iran. Russia was an important source for nuclear programs in Iran *and, to* a lesser extent, India and Pakistan," the report said.

Commenting on China's proliferation activities, a U.S. official said last week that although China's behavior is "better than what critics claim," Beijing still needs to enact a comprehensive regulatory system to control its exports of potentially sensitive commercial goods. The official also complained that China has now displaced Russia as the principal supplier of conventional arms to Iran.

Although some of this commerce has been reported previously by U.S. officials, the CIA report also cast a spotlight on several lesser-known transactions related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It said for example that firms in India, as well as China, had supplied Iran with equipment for making poison gas — although only Chinese firms were sanctioned by Washington in May for knowingly making the sales.

The CIA report also said that during the period in question, North Korea and Russia had supplied Egypt with equipment to make medium-range Scud ballistic missiles, while Iran supplied similar equipment to Syria. It described these transactions as part of a trend in which many Third World countries "have been trying to reduce their dependence on imports by developing an indigenous production capability" for dangerous arms.

The report alleged that India, Syria, and Libya, for example, have attempted to obtain equipment related to missile production, but did not say how successful they had been. It said that Libya was shopping in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the Far East, while Syria was shopping in North Korea and Iran.

The report also highlights Germany as "the favorite target" for purchases by countries pursuing weapons of mass destruction, but is ambiguous about how much equipment has recently leaked from German firms.

Top Brass Take Flak on Somalia

Howard Schneider in Halifax

CANADIAN peacekeeping troops in Somalia were "victimized" by *commanders who sent them into* the field unprepared and who ignored problems developing in an airborne regiment until they escalated into the torture and killing of a Somali teenager, a commission established to review the country's troubled 1992-93 African mission has concluded.

Far from being the fault of "a few bad apples," the events in Somalia reflected "systemic, organizational and leadership failures" in the command structure of the Canadian Defense Forces, the commission's chairman, Justice Gilles Letourneau, said last week during an Ottawa news conference at which the study was released.

Defense Minister Art Eggleton immediately criticized the report as overly harsh and "insulting," comments that reflect ongoing controversy over Canada's response to the Somalia affair. Eggleton and a predecessor who cut off the commission's work at its most sensitive stage contend that Canada's military already learned from its mistakes of Somalia and should be allowed to "put the past to rest."

However, after a two-year investigation into an episode that stained Canada's image as global keeper of the peace, the commission asserted that the military's problems run far deeper than the country's political and military leaders have admitted.

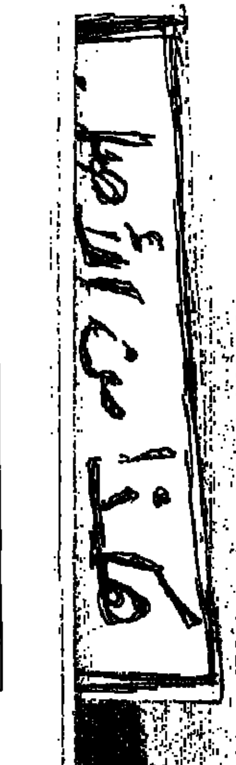
The problems were evident from the start of Canada's involvement in Somalia, according to the report, when senior officials overlooked known discipline problems in the airborne regiment and assigned it to the mission without proper training or preparation for peacekeeping in the midst of a civil war. They continued in the field, where officers ignored incidents of "thuggery" and improper use of weapons among the troops.

When two Somali youths were shot in the back after apparently trying to steal supplies from a Canadian base, the incident was ruled to be within the "rules of engagement," even though a military doctor said he thought a criminal investigation was needed.

And ultimately, the commission found, the problems continued as senior officers tried to manipulate information to play down the incidents in Somalia, and later lied to the commission.

The commission's report, titled "Dishonoured Legacy," included recommendations that the military police and justice system be placed under independent command and that an inspector general be established to investigate military operations.

The members of the airborne regiment responsible for the torture killing of Shidane Arone, a Somali teenager, were prosecuted; a private was convicted of manslaughter, and a sergeant attempted suicide before facing trial. Letourneau said that it was unlikely that any further charges would be filed in connection with peacekeepers' deeds.



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Drug Lord Dies After Surgery

Douglas Farah

THE U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration last Sunday confirmed the death of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the leader of Mexico's most powerful drug cartel, who died last week following eight hours of plastic surgery to drastically alter his appearance.

Mexican officials invited DEA agents to view the body and observe the identification procedures at the funeral home in Carrillo's home state of Sinaloa, DEA Administrator Thomas A. Constantine said in a telephone interview. The DEA agents also photographed the body.

Constantine said that according to information from U.S. intelligence and Mexican officials, Carrillo and his organization had been under increasing pressure during the last six months, forcing the drug baron to live as a fugitive. Constantine said "fairly reliable sources" indicated Carrillo recently had flown to Russia, Cuba and South American countries "constantly looking for a safe haven."

Because of that, Constantine said, Carrillo's desire to undergo massive plastic surgery made sense.

Narcotics experts estimate about 70 percent of the cocaine used in the United States — a multibillion-dollar trade — comes through Mexico, and Mexican drug trafficking organizations recently have begun to take over U.S. markets from Colombian competitors.

"Amado Carrillo Fuentes was arguably the most powerful drug trafficker in Mexico," Constantine said. "The disruption his death will cause among Mexican drug trafficking organizations will be significant. Law enforcement on both sides of the border should capitalize on the ensuing confusion and redouble our efforts to destroy his organization."

The Mexican attorney general's office said in a statement that a man had been admitted on Thursday last week under the name of Antonio Flores Montes to the Santa Monica hospital, a small, private Mexico City clinic, for extensive plastic surgery on his face and liposuction of his body.

The patient underwent eight hours of surgery, then was moved to Room 407 in the hospital, according to the Mexican attorney general. The following morning a doctor making rounds discovered the patient dead in his bed, the statement said.

The attorney general's office said it conducted an autopsy and fingerprint tests on the body, but its statement added, "Although from the tests carried out so far there are indications that the body which allegedly belongs to Antonio Flores Montes is really that of Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the [attorney general] cannot, at the moment, affirm this with total certainty."

On Friday last week the body was flown by chartered airplane to Sinaloa's capital, Culiacan. Officials of the Mexican attorney general's office visited the funeral home.

Mexican authorities later removed the body and its silver-colored coffin under heavy security after a vitriolic argument with family members, according to news reports from Culiacan.

Carrillo, 41, was known as the "Lord of the Skies" because he pioneered flying large shipments of cocaine from Colombia directly to the Mexican-U.S. border in large jets. While building his empire, he skillfully negotiated with Colombian cocaine cartels to take over an increasing share of the drug distribution within the United States.

The drug baron also excelled in corrupting Mexican politicians and law enforcement officials to guarantee impunity for his actions. Earlier this year, Mexico's top anti-drug official was jailed for allegedly being on Carrillo's payroll.



A seized photograph showing Amado Carrillo Fuentes with his mother, Doña Aurora, and wife, Sonia Barragán Pérez

Tyson Should Have Been Given an Earful Long Ago

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

LET ME see if I have this right. After all, I've gone a few rounds with Mike Tyson and the brain gets a little addled in these encounters. Fortunately, the only holes in my ears are the ones I put earrings through.

But if I have it right, the outpouring of outrage, the shock on the part of sportswriters and fans, is not because the convicted rapist once assaulted a woman's body in a hotel room but because he assaulted Evander Holyfield's aural organs in a boxing ring.

If I have it right, the post-fight crowd that screamed and made obscene gestures at the 31-year-old ex-con for his inappropriate use of teeth, never threw water bottles at him for misusing his other body parts. They never attacked him for saying, "I like to hurt women when I make love to them. I like to hear them scream. . . . It gives me pleasure."

If I have it right, moreover, the contrite champ of chomps who admitted that he'd "snapped," who apologized to "the people who expected more from Mike Tyson," and promised to seek help, never expressed the most fleeting remorse, the itsy-bitsiest contrition to Desiree Washington.

Until now, the fact that Tyson is a sex offender who couldn't move onto your street without registering with the police, did nothing to undermine his box office attraction. In fact, he was more respected than Oliver McCall, scorned last February because of his refusal to fight.

Now, I admit I have problems with boxing. I don't get it. Never will. Explain to me why it's perfectly OK to beat the brains out of someone but not to bite his ears? Holyfield's lawyer, Jim Thomas, said in high dudgeon, "This is a sport with rules and regulations. It's not street fighting." The idea of boxing as contained violence? Hitting someone without anger? Hurting others by the rules?

The gentleman's sport of fisticuffs eludes me and most of those with my chromosomes, not including the two professional women boxers who were a warm-up act for Tyson and Holyfield. But there is something especially bizarre when this man finally becomes a pariah for breaking the rules in the ring rather than breaking the laws outside the ring.

Let us go back to those magical yesteryears. Not all the way back to adolescence when Tyson's pals remembered him mugging old ladies in the elevator. Not all the way to the days when he said that without boxing, he would have been "in jail or dead. One of those."

Just to the 1992 trial when crowds cheered the champ, and when Desiree Washington was regarded by many as either a woman who asked for it or a racial traitor trying to bring another black man down. If Holyfield were a woman, these folks would have said that Mike was just nibbling her ear fondly and she took it wrong.

Fast forward to the day in 1995 when the Indiana prison doors opened and Tyson was treated as if he'd come out of retirement, not out of jail. To the hero's welcome he received in Harlem that was billed as a "Day of Redemption" though he was redeemed without ever admitting wrong.

Remember the children who danced and sang to the "The Mike Tyson Rap": "True, he's not your mom or your pops, but in some households he's got more props"— meaning respect. The rapist was a role model.

Those of us who hoped the unrepentant fighter would be shunned by fans and such moral forces as Showtime or MGM were drowned out by the sound of the cash register ringing. The ex-con was an even bigger draw.

But now— *now* —the phones are ringing off the hook in Nevada with folks demanding their money back. *Now* the Nevada State Athletic Commission has temporarily suspended him. *Now* the man says he will seek help to "tell me why I did what I did." *Now* people say, wonderingly, "he turned into a wild man."

Well, don't bite my ear off, but they're a touch late here. Assault a woman and you can still be a contender. Gnaw a tidbit off a man's ear and it's a career-suspending injury.

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Water Rats Bring Menace to the Waves

Pirates are terrorizing the high seas, reports **John Grissim**



ILLUSTRATION: CHRISTOPHER BING

IN FEBRUARY 1996, the fishing vessel Normina and its crew of 10 was at work off the southern Philippines Islands. Just before noon, two speedboats, each with two men aboard, drew alongside. Their occupants suddenly brandished automatic weapons and opened fire. In less than a minute, the gunmen killed nine of the unarmed crew. The 10th, Jangay Ajinohon, 50, was wounded in the back of his head but managed to leap overboard and swim away. The Normina has not been seen since.

Late one evening in September 1996, the luxury motor yacht Carenia was moored in a cove in the calm waters off the Greek island of Corfu. Owner Keith Hedley and three friends were asleep aboard. Four men in a speedboat pulled alongside and attempted to cut the line to the yacht's tender. Hedley, who had been awakened by the disturbance, fired a shotgun in an attempt to foil the attack. The pirates overpowered Hedley and his friends, holding them at gunpoint while they ransacked the yacht. Alerted by the shotgun blasts, Greek police arrived and a gun battle erupted. Hedley was killed in the cross-fire. The pirates managed to escape in their speedboat.

Piracy is back. These incidents were among the 224 reported attacks that occurred last year. While notable for their savagery, they are representative of the modern-day acts of piracy that are occurring on the high seas, in coastal waters, at anchor and even at dockside, involving vessels of every type and flag, from sailing yachts and small ferries to huge chemical tankers and container ships.

The phenomenon is so new that an organized effort to compile statistics did not begin until 1992. That year, 106 attacks were reported, and the yearly totals have been rising ever since. Authorities believe the statistics don't reflect the extent of the problem. They suspect that incidents go unreported — because of fears of retribution (26 people were murdered last year alone in piracy attacks) and because many shipmasters pressured by tight delivery schedules may not want to risk lengthy delays in port dealing with investigations. Such avoidance, coupled with the fact that law enforcement agencies in many countries give low priority to (or ignore altogether) piratical attacks in their waters, not only masks the true dimensions of the threat, but has encouraged pirate gangs in some regions to ply their deadly trade with little fear of reprisal.

Piracy has always flourished in narrow, busy shipping channels frequented by unprotected vessels carrying rich cargoes in regions that are rarely patrolled. But lately, a new area of vulnerability has emerged: outer anchorages in busy, crowded ports where the emergency response time by harbor police may be 30 minutes to an hour or more.

Attacks have become especially prevalent in Asian waters, where the absence of naval power, coastal police patrols, cooperative law enforcement and treaty agreements have made the shipping lanes a pirate's dream. Criminal enterprises using sophisticated knowledge of the shipping industry, and often aided by compliant local officials, can plunder with minimal risk. In some cases, pirates have tied up the bridge crews of large oil tankers and freighters, leaving the ships adrift and creating a scary potential for grounding or collision and an environmentally disastrous oil spill.

In 1992, faced with the realization that piracy had become a serious problem, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a nonprofit division of the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce, convened a meeting on piracy between representatives of the shipping industry and law enforcement. The result was the creation of the Regional Piracy Centre (RPC), operating out of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, largely because Asia was the scene of so many attacks. Financed by voluntary contributions from the shipping and insurance industries, the RPC began offering an around-the-clock help line, issuing daily reports of suspicious craft movements and assisting law enforcement agencies in the reporting of incidents.

As word of the RPC's existence spread, its mission began to pay off. Shipmasters who saw suspicious activity called the center's hot line and were advised to increase speed immediately and to waggle their sterns to increase the difficulty of a boarding attempt. Captains were instructed to turn on all deck lights, train search lights on the attackers' boats, assemble their crews on deck and get the fire hoses ready to fight them off. If the attackers succeeded in boarding, however, the crews were told to cease further resistance. The tactics worked: A significant number of attacks were prevented.

Some shipmasters devised tactics of their own. One skipper, vexed by intruders climbing up his ship's anchor to gain access through the hawse pipe, thwarted that approach by wrapping a portion of the chain in a net covered with fish hooks.

In the fall of 1995, an incident occurred that provided a convincing demonstration of the RPC's raison d'etre. In September 1995, the Anna Sierra, a Cyprus-registered general cargo vessel, left Bangkok for Manila, carrying 12 tons of sugar valued at $5 million. The night after departure, 25 to 30 masked pirates, many armed with machine guns, appeared in two speedboats and stormed aboard. They rounded up the captain and 24 crewmen at gunpoint and handcuffed them together.

Two nights later, in rough weather, the pirates threw their prisoners overboard next to makeshift rafts with no water, food or provisions. The following day, by the merest chance, the survivors were rescued by two Vietnamese fishing boats 60 miles off the coast of Vietnam. A report of the hijacking soon reached the RPC.

The center's manager, John Martin, contacted every port from India to Japan, advised them of the ship's hijacking and offered a $50,000 reward. His alert included one identifying characteristic about the ship that later proved crucial: the Anna Sierra's original name, Diagara, had been welded onto the ship's bow and stern in raised steel letters and later painted over after a legitimate change of ownership.

After the pirates jettisoned the Anna Sierra's crew, they repainted the ship, renamed it the Artic Sea (the misspelling was theirs) and sailed it to the Chinese port of Beihai, 350 miles west of Hong Kong. Just after the ship arrived, an alert employee of a shipping company there spotted the raised letters and within hours the International Maritime Bureau's office in London was notified.

At the IMB's request, Chinese authorities in Beihai ordered the ship to come into port. On arrival, they put armed guards on board, seized passports and confined the suspected pirates to the ship until an investigation was conducted.

For the IMB and its fledgling Piracy Centre, the apprehension was a spectacular success. But later events demonstrated the pitfalls to prosecution and recovery in some countries. When Martin succeeded in showing the authorities that the Artic Sea's papers were clumsy frauds, a local company in Beihai stepped forward with a second set of papers. Martin quickly countered with documents showing that those papers, too, were forged.

But that still didn't end the matter, Martin said. "What happened next was another company came out of the woodwork, saying 'Ah, yes, that first company was run by gangsters. We are the real company.' We then disproved the second company's documents, but no sooner did we do so than a third company stepped forward. And each time the documents got better," he said.

Today, more than 18 months after the incident, the Anna Sierra lies mired in the mud. The 14 pirates were released and sent home without any charges being filed.

While Southeast Asia has by far the highest incident rate of piracy, the Americas surprisingly have the second worst record. Last year's total was 30 attacks, 16 of which happened in Brazilian waters. Of the latter, most of them happened to vessels at anchor or in port. On several occasions, police were called during the attacks but either failed to respond or showed up a day later.

To curb piracy, officials say the world community must first understand how serious a problem it has become

"Brazil remains a highly dangerous area and this will continue to be so as long as the authorities fail to acknowledge the situation," Martin wrote in the RPC's annual report.

To curb piracy, authorities say the international community must first understand how serious a problem it has become. Martin, whose tenure at the RPC's helm has made him the premier authority on piracy, said: "Better policing is the key."

Martin's message is getting through to the industry. More and more indemnity clubs (self-insurance pools to which most responsible shippers subscribe as an insurance of last resort) are helping to provide operating support for RPC's effort. In the meantime, he says, hard intelligence about any instance of piracy is the best weapon in the fight to make safer the dangerous waters of the modern world.

A Fond Farewell to Empire

COMMENT
Charles Krauthammer

AT MIDNIGHT on June 30, Bermuda became the crown jewel of the British Empire. Britannia once commanded tea from Ceylon, tobacco from Virginia and rubber from Malaya. It now sports shorts.

This has been a bad century for empire. The end of both (century and empire) was neatly marked by the return of Hong Kong to China. Which produced this even more melancholy fact: Britain, which gave the world Australia and New Zealand, now has exactly one Pacific possession, Pitcairn Island, population 54. And the only reason the Union Jack still flies over Pitcairn — its inhabitants descended mostly from Fletcher Christian and his fellow Bounty mutineers, a nice touch — is that there is no one to give it back to.

Why melancholy? As someone who started his Montreal school days singing "God Save the Queen," I experienced first-hand how benevolent life in the British Commonwealth (as the empire was known in its dying days) could be. Yet even those whose colonial experience was harsher look with some wistfulness at British rule.

Certainly, the Hong Kongers do. Hence the widespread trepidation that greeted the handover to Chinese rule.

Hong Kong is a fitting place for the British Empire to go out of business. (Except for Gibraltar, its remaining holdings are a few scattered islands. The Hong Kong handover put on dazzling display what Britain, given the chance and the time, hath wrought: individual rights, a moderate degree of self-government, and astonishing prosperity, indeed, a standard of living higher than that of the mother country. This from what Lord Palmerston termed a "barren rock" when, 155 years ago, he stole it fair and square for the Crown.

So dazzling is Hong Kong that the major immediate problem facing China is restraining the hordes of those living in the glorious Peoples' Republic from storming the gates to get into the new "Special Administrative Region."

The handover of Hong Kong has highlighted and legitimized a newly sympathetic view of colonialism, and particularly British colonialism — a view sustained by Lawrence James in his prodigious The Rise And Fall Of The British Empire," in which he concludes that "Britain's empire was a moral force and one for the good."

On the whole, yes. Even Ho Chi Minh offered a backhanded compliment to the benignancy and tolerance of British rule, when he noted, in 1922, that Gandhi "would have long since entered heaven had he been born in one of the French colonies."

But the British Empire was not just benign relative to its contemporaries. It ranks among the most beneficent in history. Consider that the most blessed places on the planet — as judged accurately by the countries that refugees and immigrants most clamor to get into — are Canada, Australia and the United States, lands originally settled by Britons and built in the political and cultural image of the mother country.

This is not to deny that this empire was built with a sense of insufferable national (and racial) superiority and with occasional cruelty and much brute force. But it is hard to think of an empire that wasn't. It is equally hard to think of one that left behind so much. And one legacy above all: the idea of liberty, from which flowed the blessings of limited government, individual rights, protection against arbitrary power, and, as an added bonus, the prosperity that attends freedom.

Of course, for most of its life, the British Empire had a fairly narrow view of who qualified for liberty. The story of the last century and a half in Britain (and much of the West) is the story of the methodical expansion of the circle of freedom, outward from white males to include other races and women.

That expansion — the culmination and vindication of the idea of liberty — finds expression today in the political life of West. But, until July 1, it found expression also in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is now given up and consigned to an uncertain fate. Which is why so much of the world noted with ambivalence and apprehension the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to the masters of Tiananmen. Which, in turn, is why, as we say farewell Hong Kong and all that, we might raise a glass to the late great Empire.

South Koreans See North's Economic Potential

Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan in Seoul

WHEN MOST people look at North Korea, they see hunger and economic collapse. When South Korean businessman Kim Young Il looks, he sees dollar signs.

Since 1990, Kim has imported $10 million worth of goods from the Communist North: sesame seeds, honey, cement, beans, fish, herbal medicines. He even brought in 102 tons of North Korean dirt, which has been a huge novelty hit.

Because of South Korea's severely restrictive laws on dealing with the North, Kim cannot telephone anyone there, fly or drive there directly, or import goods directly across the border. The two Koreas, technically at war for four decades, have massive armies and state-of-the-art missiles facing each other.

But, despite military threats and constant swings in political climate that make his business exasperating, Kim said he's investing in a potentially lucrative future. He is selling a million cans of an herbal-medicine soft drink made from a powder extracted from North Korean pine trees. It sells for just over $1 a can.

"This is about building ties," he said. "We need to improve our know-how in dealing with North Korea. The potential for future business is great."

Virtually everyone in the South is betting on a unified Korean Peninsula one day, and businessmen like Kim have started getting ready. So has the government of South Korea, cautiously. Realizing the tremendous costs involved in drawing together the impoverished North and the wealthy South, the Seoul government has begun to allow more private businesses to establish ties with the North.

"Businessmen are performing the role of catalyst between the two Koreas," said Koh Il Dong, research fellow at the Korea Development Institute, a Seoul think tank.

Most analysts agree South Korean capital is North Korea's best hope for economic resuscitation. No other nation has the emotional, cultural or economic incentives to rescue North Korea from economic disaster. While most South Koreans hate the North Korean leadership, many still believe a reunited Korean Peninsula is the natural order of things.

Exports from North Korea to South Korea have jumped from $18 million in 1989 to $182 million last year, and this year's figures are on track to exceed $200 million. South Korean exports to the North have climbed from $69,000 in 1989 to $61 million last year. These figures are Seoul's official tallies; many believe the actual amount is much higher because of small dealers like Kim working quietly through third countries.

In 1995, the massive Daewoo conglomerate was the first South Korean company to win government permission to invest directly in North Korea. The Daewoo textile plant in Nampo, run with a North Korean partner, is operating and aims to produce 600,000 jackets, 300,000 bags and 3 million shirts yearly.

Last month a second South Korean firm, Taechang, was granted permission to bottle spring water from Kumkangsan, a famous North Korean mountain. The company plans to do something unthinkable even a few months ago — ship the spring water directly from Wonsan in North Korea to Pusan in South Korea. Most goods are still shipped through a third country, usually China.

A dozen more firms, including Samsung Electronics, are in the final stages of gaining government approval for joint venture projects in telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and consumer electronics. Some ambitious investors have drawn up plans for ski resorts and other vacation getaways in the North, where some of the peninsula's most spectacular natural beauty remains virtually undeveloped.

Richard Samuelson, senior analyst at SBC Warburg in Seoul, said "sentimental dynamics" are driving much of the inter-Korean trade. Ten million South Koreans, almost one-fourth of the population, have direct family ties to North Korea.

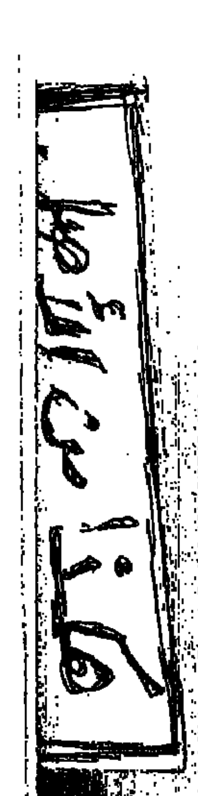
When Kim announced he would give away the dirt in two-pound jars, saying it was an investment in the good image of his company and unseemly to sell soil, 6,000 South Koreans wrote asking for a jar.

Per-capita annual income in the North is about $900, compared with about $10,000 in the South, and Kim said the low wages in the North gave him big savings in the labor-intensive work.

"It's impossible to find a better fit: The North has cheap labor and natural resources, the South has capital and technology," said a U.S. official in Seoul.

The joke here is that one of South Korea's massive industrial conglomerates could buy all of North Korea. North Korea's gross domestic product is estimated at about $21 billion; Daewoo has annual sales of more than $22.5 billion.





Declaration of Planetary Hope

T. H. Watkins

BILLIONS AND BILLIONS
Thoughts on Life and Death at The Brink of the Millennium
By Carl Sagan
Random House. 241pp. $24

CARL SAGAN was an optimist to the end, hoping that science, to which he had devoted his life, would be able to give him life for a few more years. He hoped as well that the nations of the world would somehow transcend human cussedness and the iron weight of history to build a future in which they would not blow one another off the face of the earth — or so corrupt the planet that there would be no real reason to hang around. He was wrong in the first hope, dying of a vagrant strain of pneumonia after two years of exhaustive and exhausting therapy for a rare blood disease called myelodysplasia. It remains to be seen whether the second hope was better founded than the first — though it must be said that he did his personal best to make it come true.

Arguably, this astronomer and intellectual planetary explorer was the greatest popularizer of science in modern times. He was neither as skilled a writer as, say, Lewis Thomas or E.O. Wilson nor as deep a thinker as Stephen Jay Gould or Freeman Dyson. But if you stopped someone on the street and asked that person to name a living scientist, Sagan almost certainly would have been the name that came to mind. His famously successful "Cosmos" television series, his frequent appearances on the "Tonight" show, his 10 previous books, all written for the general reader (indeed, one of them was a novel called Contact, just made into a motion picture), and his regular articles in Parade and other general-interest magazines spread him across the cultural landscape. He was not just a scientist; he was a Personality.

This tended to earn Sagan disdain among some of his fellow scientists. But what could not be gainsaid was his consistent defense of scientific inquiry, his relentless campaign to increase the funding for NASA research programs, and, above all, his crusades to end the possibility of nuclear war and stave off environmental collapse. More than just about any other celebrity I can think of, Sagan used the spotlight of his fame to illuminate the abyss into which stupidity, greed, and the lust for power may yet dump us.

All of those interests and causes are handsomely represented in Billions And Billions (Sagan says he never used the phrase; Johnny Carson did, as part of a "rough imitation" of him). Some of the material is original, some of it was previously published in Parade, and one chapter consists of a speech he gave at the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1988.

As in most collections, there is a certain eclectic character to Billions And Billions as it wanders in subject matter from the mechanics of light waves ("The Gaze of God and the Dripping Faucet") to the often paradoxical dicta of human social behavior ("The Rules of the Game"). Still, what ties the book together is a devotion to life so fierce that he found it almost impossible not to dream of its existence beyond this lonely cinder called earth.

In the first part of the book he explores what we know (little) and what we can guess (a lot) of the possibilities of extraterrestrial life, a whole-souled enthusiasm of his with which most of the civilized world became familiar whether it wanted to or not. Life may be out there in another form on another planet, another moon, he says here again; let's go find out.

But while doing so, let's not ignore what we are doing to life here on earth, a warning that dominates the long middle section of the book. The depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, deforestation, species extinction, the disposal of radioactive materials. He is equally convincing when talking about the terrifying implications of a world gone politically chaotic even while much of it retains the power to destroy everything in a massive nuclear frenzy.

Is life on this planet then doomed even as we dream (some of us, anyway) of finding it elsewhere? Maybe not, he speculates, though admitting that there are a lot of ifs involved. If developed nations severely reduce their production of chlorofluorocarbons and their dependence upon fossil fuels; if developing nations stop cutting down forests; if, as he said at Gettysburg, nations learn to "reconcile, not after the carnage and the mass murder, but instead of the carnage and mass murder": Should these and other ifs be met, he says, life may survive, but it is going to take more pure effort than any other endeavor in human history.

Sagan was not a pessimist, but he was not a fool, either. He knew how stubbornly we human beings cling to the convictions and traditions that can kill us. Still, he chose as his last testament a declaration of hope that we still have time to mend our ways.

Smitten by Love's Sting

Jonathan Yardley

THE UNIVERSAL DONOR
By Craig Nova
Houghton Mifflin. 250pp. $23

IT'S BEEN said here before, and unfortunately it needs to be said here again. Craig Nova is one of the best novelists now at work in the United States, and one of the least recognized or rewarded. He has now published eight novels, each excellent in its way and all distinguished by qualities too little valued in today's self-regarding literary culture: a deep interest in the lives of others and the moral condition of the larger society, a commitment to narrative and plot, and a lucid prose that eschews showiness. The Universal Donor maintains this high level of achievement.

It is a novel of suspense set in that genre's home ground, Los Angeles. Against the backdrop of a city rocked by violence induced by racial grievances, with much of its action taking place in a hospital hard by the combat zone, it tells the story of a few moderately privileged people whose private lives undergo agonies of their own. Nova draws no parallels between these tribulations, declines to make the self-evident point that suffering is suffering no matter the condition of those upon whom it is visited. He simply tells his story straight up.

The protagonist is Terry McKechnie, in his mid-thirties, a specialist in internal medicine who spends two nights a week at a hospital "south of Westwood," one that "took cases from neighborhoods that were well-off and those that weren't." He has "gone through the same process as most physicians, a kind of hardening that was necessary to go on being a doctor, but recently this toughness had become insufficient." He doesn't know where his life is taking him, and he is beset by a "constant, unrelieved longing for someone else" to love and be intimate with.

Then a new case arrives at the hospital: Virginia Lee, "a tall woman, close to 30, slender, with blond hair that was a metallic color." She works at a laboratory extracting venom from snakes and has been bitten by one, an exotic variety. This poses hard choices for Terry: "The trouble was that a lot of exotic snakebites were idiosyncratic. Certainly he had heard of cases where everything seemed to be fine, and then the patient crashed: renal failure, shock, hemorrhage in the brain."

So a medical drama begins to unfold, but it is far more than that. Virginia is Terry's "someone else." She only recently married Rick Bartlett, a medical school classmate of Terry's who has opted for the nine-to-five tranquillity of dermatology, but soon after the wedding she and Terry begin a passionate affair that both know ought to be more than that. So Terry isn't merely trying to save a patient's life, isn't merely trying to save his lover's life; he is trying to save his own life.

There are four complicating elements. The first is the snakebite. Terry "had been taught always to shoot for the middle of the bell curve in the treatment of patients, because the most likely occurrence was in the middle of the realm of possibilities. But this case didn't fall in the middle." The second is that Virginia has an extremely rare, almost exotic, blood type; not even Terry, a universal donor, can give her blood. The third is that Rick Bartlett suspects that something is going on between his wife and his friend; his expressions of concern for her are compounded — and diminished — by nagging questions and challenges to Terry's medical practices. The fourth is the uninvited presence of a man known only as Number 2 (from his place in a police lineup), a small-time but violent criminal who at once threatens Terry's safety and offers him an avenue of escape.

It is a complicated plot, and a complicated moral situation. Terry and Virginia are decent people, reared as such and determined to be faithful to that upbringing. Rick by contrast is snide, lazy and self-absorbed. Yet in conventional terms Virginia and Terry are the wrongdoers while Rick occupies the high ground. By the same token Number 2 is clearly a thug and a menace, yet by a freak of nature he is in a position to serve as an agent, if not an angel, of mercy. Who is right and who is wrong? Exactly how far can Terry go, and in what directions, without forfeiting his decency and thus his essential self?

THESE are thematic matters, but they emerge from the narrative rather than attach themselves to it as barnacles. This is a mark of real skill on Nova's part, for when a serious novelist gets his hands on serious thematic business, the temptation to belabor it is extreme. Yet the interrelationship of characters and story on the one hand, theme on the other, is most effective when least obvious. It is old-fashioned to say so, but it is true: Story is more important than anything else in fiction, i.e., in storytelling, and everything else should flow naturally from it. This Nova accomplishes in The Universal Donor with what looks like ease but is obviously careful effort.


ILLUSTRATION: JILL KARLA SCHWARTZ

Brothers at Arms

Peter D. Kramer

IMAGINING ROBERT: My Brother, Madness and Survival — A Memoir
By Jay Neugeboren
Morrow. 305pp. $24

HERE are two curly-haired brothers, as alike as peas in a pod. Their physical gestures are similar, as are their tastes in art, music and people. Both have gifts for prose, both delight in nonsense and wordplay. They have the same friends, attend the same summer camp. In high school they share a 9-by-12-foot room in the family apartment in Brooklyn. And then their lives diverge. Jay Neugeboren finds a career that will make him as knowable to others as a person ever is, through seven novels, numerous short stories, a memoir (Parentheses) written in his early thirties, and now an account of his relationship with his younger brother. Robert becomes all but unknowable, shut off from the world since his teens when he embarked on a career of chronic mental illness.

Jay endures the pain of Robert's deterioration by imagining a second Robert, "the brother I grew up with," who has vanished. But the life of the first and living Robert is so hard to comprehend that he, too, must be imagined. Jay can recall every detail of their childhood; when he does, he wonders about "what I can never know: what it is like for Robert, in his feelings and memories?" Imagining Robert is a series of sallies at this writerly goal: Jay reconstructs moments of family life, reviews encounters with the medical system, and excerpts diaries and letters, all in hopes of conjuring a character, his brother.

Growing up in Brooklyn in the 1940s and '50s, Robert was the favorite and Jay the scapegoat of a mercurial, sometimes deranged mother. Energetic, scheming, intrusive, Anne Neugeboren has much in common with a Bruce Jay Freedman mother, except that the genre here is more horror than comedy. "What a love affair I'm having with this one!" she says of young Robert. Of Jay: "Who could ever love that one?" She would be the model of the schizophrenogenic mother if that theory were still current. And yet the childhood Jay remembers contains moments of warmth and wonder.

Jay escapes to college and the writer's life. Robert succumbs to his demons — he makes a move to strangle the boys' devoted and ineffectual father — and leaves home for the horrific world of mental health care. Over three decades, the diagnoses change: schizophrenia, manic depression. So do the treatments: psychotherapy, antipsychotic drugs, anticonvulsants. Jay is at his most disturbing when describing the evangelical atmosphere of the insulin-coma ward at Creedmoor State Hospital, a facility where Robert lived for many years. The false optimism, impersonality and menace of the unit are emblematic of the care Robert receives throughout his life.

Because what does not change is the inadequacy of caregivers. Physicians, social workers, psychologists — each promises to cure Robert; none delivers. ("Throw away your Sigmund Freud, Mrs. Neugeboren," exclaims one peddler of megavitamins.) Much smaller promises are broken: to continue to treat the patient, or to return phone calls. No one remembers Robert's history; a doctor will tout a new drug to Robert unaware that he has been taking this same drug for months.

Remarkably, this indictment of the mental health system is embedded in a narrative that is most pleasurable to read. The viewpoint is Jay Neugeboren's consciousness, and despite some stylistic quirks — in an attempt to replicate the back-and-forth of daily thought he stuffs sentences with dashes, parentheses and semicolons — he is engaging company and a trustworthy host.

The result is not a proxy autobiography of Robert; Jay cannot penetrate the experience of mental illness. Rather, as details of the brothers' interactions accumulate, what emerges is a meditation on identity and epistemology. How autonomous are we, and how [illegible] versibly connected? How is it that an unloved child matures while the favored sibling becomes [illegible] blighted double? How do we come to know a person we [illegible] about — beyond the constant production and revision of stories [illegible] an imagined other?

Cost-cutting and changes in attitudes have brought an explosion in new teaching technologies, writes **Anne Nicholls**

A successful screen test

SUZIE climbs out of bed on a cold January morning, looks out of the window on to snowy moorland, turns on the central heating and prepares for a hard day's work. She has a difficult assignment to complete — 2,000 words on post-Impressionist art. But before she gets stuck in she scrolls through her e-mail to find three messages from fellow students (none of whom she has actually met) who are also struggling with the assignment. "Does anyone know what 'pointillism' is?" writes one. A message from Suzie's tutor announces a video-conferencing session at 2pm, which will help. Meanwhile she surfs the Internet to have a look at some of the paintings in the Louvre. Finally, at 5pm she completes the assignment, sends it by e-mail to her tutor 800km away at the University of Cybershire and switches off.

Is this a vision of the future? No, students are already learning like this. Sitting at a workstation surfing through the world's libraries and "meeting" new fellow students on-screen sounds an exciting way to learn, but the reasons why many colleges and universities are going down the distance learning route is more pragmatic. It is all about "how to deliver more for less" — how to save money, but still deliver high-quality teaching and learning.

The other illusion to burst is that distance learning is now fully automated, with students working via their home computers. In reality, most distance learning is still based on the medium of print. "Although more and more of our students are buying PCs, the majority still need and prefer to work through the medium of print," says Ros Morpeth, director of the National Extension College (one of the largest providers of distance learning courses and materials in the UK).

There is no evidence that technology is the answer: it can end up being more expensive and less effective than other methods, says David Hardy, chief executive of the Open Learning Foundation (formerly the Open Polytechnic). "It requires time and investment setting up systems and developing materials. It also requires a massive culture change. Materials on their own do not solve the problems; what is important is what you do with them," he says. "There are also fundamental issues about how to manage resources. A 'whole organisation' approach is needed. Most universities have a 'Portakabin' culture with no overall policy on teaching and learning, which is plain daft."

Until recently, nearly all the innovative work in distance learning has been at the margins, with the exception of organisations such as the Open University and the National Extension College.

The Open University, for instance, is investing $980 million over five years developing new approaches to teaching and learning through its new Knowledge Media Institute, set up in 1995. New materials are being created to replace paper and talk. Students of art history, for instance, can view a painting on their PC screens and change its composition. Researchers have also come up with a virtual microscope — superficially a CD-ROM containing thousands of photographs of rock samples at different angles and degrees of magnification and polarisation. There is a virtual summer school which links a small group of psychology students in different countries.

> **Sitting at a workstation surfing through the world's libraries and 'meeting' new fellow students on-screen sounds an exciting way to learn**

The Open College has launched a new range of Internet and Intranet services to combat the feeling of isolation suffered by distance learners.

All very exciting, but the key issue is how colleges and universities are going to make distance learning work for them. Setting up the infrastructure and achieving culture change is not easy.

"It's a very complex area. Many lecturers are anti-distance learning because they see it as education on the cheap — more work for less reward," says Roger Lewis, BP Professor of Learning Development at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. "At the moment everyone is scrambling around doing the same things with fewer and fewer resources, or trying to introduce distance learning in a half-hearted piecemeal fashion."

Some innovative work in distance learning has been done among a number of further education colleges and some of the former polytechnics. In most cases the motivation has been a mixture of financial (teaching more students with fewer resources) and educational (offering opportunities for students who otherwise would not be able to participate).

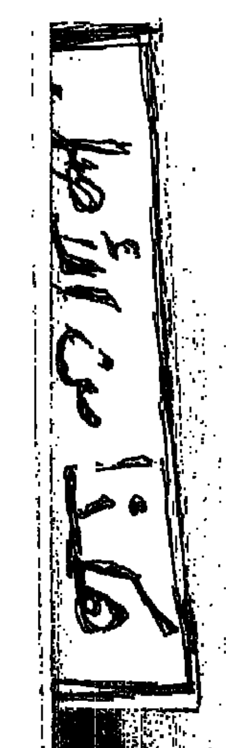
The "older" universities have, in general, been under less pressure to develop distance learning, although it was London university that started it all by setting up its external degree programme in 1858. (A number of the older universities, notably Leicester, were originally London university centres for external degrees.) The demand from students for more flexible modes of learning is certainly there. Stockport College has had a 54 per cent increase in students wanting flexible learning instead of traditional courses. Other further education (FE) colleges report a similar picture. The overseas market also appears to be booming. When Sue Gidman, London university's director of marketing for external degrees, visited the British Education Fair in Hong Kong last year, she was astounded by the increase in distance learning courses in just two years.

Student attitudes are also changing. "Distance learning used to be a last resort for people who couldn't attend college or university. Now students are opting for it as their first choice because it offers flexibility and a guarantee of quality," says Ros Morpeth of the National Extension College.

Distance learning also has a special attraction for students with physical disabilities. "These students find themselves on an equal footing with other students with whom they can communicate over the e-mail and Internet."

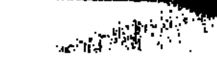
A "head-in-the-sand" attitude to distance learning by the universities and colleges may prove to be disastrous. It is well known that the FE sector is in financial trouble, and universities and colleges could save money by making their courses more resource-centred and less teaching-intensive. It is really a question of adapt, or sink.

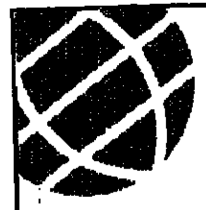
Open learning is an umbrella term for any scheme of education or training that seeks systematically to remove barriers to learning, whether they be concerned with time, place or space. Individual learners take responsibility for what they learn, how they learn, where they learn, how quickly they learn, who helps them and when they have their learning assessed. Distance learning is one particular form of open learning in which tutors and learners are separated by geographical distance.













Country Representative

Based in Brazil - Contract: 3 years

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SULTANATE OF OMAN

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The Ministry of Regional Municipalities & Environment (MRME) invites applications for the above post in the Directorate General for Environmental Affairs.

Requirements

M.Sc./Ph.D. in hydrogeology environmental engineering; 16 years practical experience in hazardous waste and industrial waste management, groundwater pollution control and environmental impact assessment procedures. Previous Middle East experience, computer literacy and fluent in English.

Responsibilities

Word on a nation-wide basis in close co-operation with the Head of Water & Waste Management and other senior staff of the Directorate General for Environmental Affairs in all required environmental aspects of hazardous waste management programmes; groundwater pollution control and oilfield production water management policy development; database management; inspection programmes; incident reports, environmental permit development; EIA requirements and training of Omani staff. The position is based at the Ministry's head office in Muscat both the work scope will relate to all Regions of the Sultanate therefore travel and site visits will be an integral part of the position.

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Please reply with full CV to Dr Sadiq Bin Abdulhussain Al-Muscati, Director General for Environmental Affairs, MRME, P.O. Box 323, Muscat, Postal Code 113, Sultanate of Oman.

A one page summary only may be faxed to the Ministry at: (+968) 696460

Mines Advisory Group TRAINING CONSULTANTS

The following consultants are sought for the northern Iraq programme: Management trainer/s, Medical Orderly (paramedic) trainer, and Community Arts trainer.

The organisation

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is a humanitarian, non-profit, NGO concerned with the impact of landmines (especially anti-personnel mines) on innocent communities worldwide. MAG has programmes in northern Iraq, Laos, Cambodia, Angola, Zambia and Zaire.

MAG's overall goals are to help people living in mined areas to reduce risks to themselves, their families, and their livestock; to return demined land to community use; and to work towards the imposition and enforcement of a worldwide ban on the production, trade, transfer, stockpiling, and use of anti-personnel mines.

MAG's global policy, and mandate as a charity, is to establish an indigenous capacity to respond to the long-term problems of mines.

The programme

MAG has been working in northern Iraq (Kurdistan) since 1992. The goal of MAG's programme is to reduce the impact of mines and explosive ordnance on the population of northern Iraq in general, and on vulnerable rural communities in particular. To this end, MAG carries out minefield survey, reconnaissance and demarcation; mine awareness education; mine clearance, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

Summary terms of reference and selection criteria

'Cascading' management training (3 months)

Training the 10 member Senior Management Group of local staff in basic management skills including managing time, tasks, and people, with a short train-the-trainer component. The first course will be in English. Selected trainees from this course will act as assistant trainers and/or interpreters in subsequent courses for middle management, providing the local and institutional knowledge necessary to ensure the training is suited to the context.

The trainer/s will have substantial experience of management training for NGOs, including training conducted in developing countries. A knowledge of mines and mine clearance is not required.

Community Arts training (1 month)

Training the 12 member Resource Production Unit to develop dynamic, non-didactic mine awareness materials - posters, leaflets, magazines, films, radio programmes, and videos - including practical techniques (eg silk-screening, radio production); designing materials for different target groups, and analysis of different forms of literacy.

The trainer/ will have substantial experience of community arts/community education, in either overseas or cross-cultural settings, Previous training/workshop experience is required, as is a range of basic hands-on technical skills. A team of two people combining skills in the visual (graphic) and performing arts with skills in electronic and printed media would be appropriate. Knowledge of mines and mine clearance is not required.

Medical orderly training (3 months)

Working with the local Senior Medical Officer (SMO) to conduct batch training of 50 minefield medics (all MAG demining teams are accompanied by a medic). The emphasis will be on enhancing the SMO's training and management skills, with training content based on a curriculum developed by Trauma Care Foundation (Norway).

The trainer will be (at least) a qualified paramedic or nurse, with recent experience working in areas of conflict. Some familiarity with mine injuries is essential, and substantial training and management experience is required.

Expressions of interest

Written expressions of interest, addressing the above criteria, should be sent together with a curriculum vitae to the Personnel Officer no later than 21 July 1997.

For further information, telephone 01900 828 688 and ask for the Technical Coordinator (management and medical positions), or the northern Iraq Desk Officer (arts position/s).

MAG, 54a Main St, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9LU, Fax: 01900 827 088



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If you feel you can match our requirements, send a large s.a.e. for Application Pack to: Personnel Manager, Sight Savers International, Grosvenor Hall, Bolnore Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4BX.

Fax No: 01444-415866,

E-mail:codell@sightsaversint.org.uk

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For further details and an application form, please write enclosing a large stamped addressed envelope to:

Human Resources Department, Marketing Division, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ or E-Mail: awaite@oxfam.org.uk quoting the appropriate job title and reference number. Closing date: 1st August 1997.

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Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer. L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer; SA - Staff Associate

For further details of any of the above staff vacancies please contact the Appointments Department, ACU, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (Internat. tel. +44 171 813 3024 (24 hour answerphone); fax +44 171 813 3055; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.

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Further particulars including details of the application procedure should be obtained from

THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, 1 ROXBURGH STREET, EDINBURGH EH8 9TB TEL 0131 650 2511 (24 hour answering service).

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Application forms and further details can be obtained by sending a 7 x 10 stamped, addressed envelope to Personnel Services, University of North London, Holloway Road, London N7 8DB, quoting reference EW604. Closing date: 25 July 1997.

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Enquiries to either Professor T Shallice 0171 380 7601; t.shallice@psychol.ucl.ac.uk or Professor R Dolan 0171 833 7453; r.dolan@fil.ion.ucl.ac.uk, Applications to: Kate Bradford, Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT, Email: ucjtska@ucl.ac.uk.

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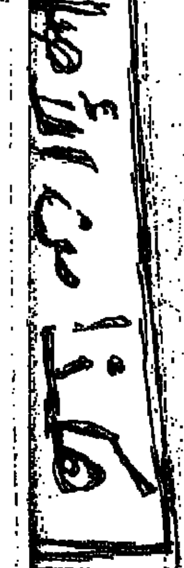
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Potential agony of Ecstasy

Clubbers' favourite drug may lead to depression, writes **Petra Coveney**

MARC is 18. He took his first Ecstasy tablet at a nightclub in Liverpool. A friend introduced him to the drug, a blue "Speckled dove". It made him feel elated, surrounded by his mates who were all on it, as though cocooned in a cloud of friendship.

Three days later Marc felt lethargic and flat, but regular users of Ecstasy said don't worry, it's only the midweek blues. He'd feel fine by the weekend — especially after taking another E. He started to live for the weekends, for the high, the euphoric feeling that you were not alone and the grin that made his jaw ache. Soon Marc was taking two and then three Es, and before long six on a Saturday night, just to reach that same uplift.

It hit him about five months later. A deep depression. He had sudden panic attacks, felt paranoid and had occasional hallucinations. Having felt surrounded by friendship, he suddenly seemed alone. He worried that his friends didn't want to be with him any more because he'd drag their mood down. At rock-bottom he was suicidal.

If Marc's was an isolated experience it could be dismissed as an aberration. But it isn't. Information is patchy and largely speculative to date, but a growing band of psychiatrists such as Sue Ruben, who treated Marc in Liverpool, are reporting that a rising number of teenagers are suffering Ecstasy-related mental health problems. It is estimated that 1 million people aged between 17 and 35 take E each weekend in Britain. If only a tiny proportion of them fall mentally ill, that's still an alarming number.

Press coverage of Ecstasy has tended to focus on dramatic cases of comas and death, such as the tragedy of Leah Betts. Yet more people die from swallowing aspirin or alcohol and the total of Ecstasy deaths (figures vary from eight to 20 a year) is almost insignificant compared with the 30,000 annual alcohol-related death toll.

But death is not the only way to be "sorted" by E. "There is clear evidence that Ecstasy can have a neurotoxic effect which causes clinical depression in some people," Sue Ruben says. "The chances of dying from E may be low, but the risk of severe side-effects is greater and more worrying."

Last month a study by Valerie Curran, reader in psychology at University College, London, gave firm scientific evidence for a trend that had previously only been suggested anecdotally — that Ecstasy is linked with depression and diminished concentration. She set up a "laboratory" in a nightclub and tested clubbers' moods and behaviour. While drinkers quickly recovered from hangovers, Ecstasy users slid into an irritable and anxious depression a few days after taking the drug.

Curran's study has been backed up by research by Michael Morgan, a psychologist at the University of Wales, who found that many Ecstasy users suffered memory loss and displayed impulsive behaviour. Taking Ecstasy, he says, is like having "a chemical lobotomy". He estimates that 10 per cent of people aged 20-30 taking Ecstasy could be affected.

Pure E consists of the stimulant drug MDMA, so it comes as no surprise to doctors that users feel a come-down when its effects wear off. What is alarming psychiatrists is that MDMA appears to be having an adverse effect on serotonin, the chemical in the brain thought to play an important part in controlling emotional stability and coherent thinking. Ecstasy acts by overstimulating the release of serotonin, so leading to a depletion of the chemical's reserves.

Low serotonin levels are associated with suicidal and impulsive behaviour, Morgan explains. "If you add to this the evidence of memory loss, then we could get a million-plus young people who have more severe mood swings and are more prone to suicide, with premature dementia symptoms similar to Alzheimer's disease. We could get 17-year-olds exhibiting aspects of geriatric brain function.

"Single-handedly it could have severe consequences for our economy and for the country because of the cost to the health service of looking after these people, the waste of education and their potential loss to the workforce," he says.

This bleak view of the future is not shared by Valerie Curran, who believes that only certain susceptible individuals will suffer the severe side-effects of Ecstasy. "Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of drugs than others. There could be a host of different biological, social and psychological factors causing this."

PHOTOMONTAGE: JIM POWELL

The truth is that in this murky world of illicit drugs, with research in its infancy, nobody knows for sure what will be the impact on regular users nor upon how many. Curran's was the first "controlled" or scientific study, but even then, she says, it was impossible to know the exact ingredients of the drug the clubbers she tested were taking. And she adds that there is no proof that Ecstasy "causes" depression and memory loss; the only certainty is that there is a link.

David, a 29-year-old university lecturer who has taken 40 Ecstasy tablets in the past two years, has suffered severe depression. He describes his condition as like having uncontrollable waves of intense emotion sweep over him.

"I've been in important meetings when it suddenly hits me and I just want to rush out and break down and cry," he says. "There are ebbs and flows within it which you feel will breach your emotional defences. You're helpless."

But even such black moments as these have not persuaded David to quit Ecstasy. He has seen others suffer similar depressions and recover, he says, so he's sceptical about the link between the drug and depression and won't give it up until more is known.

Alan Haughton believes that if we are to protect people like David from potential harm we have a moral duty to find out more about the long-term psychological effects of Ecstasy. But he doubts that research will be funded.

"In the scale of funding, Ecstasy comes very low in the drugs hierarchy compared with drugs like heroin," he predicts. "Those in authority will say, 'Who cares whether this vast group of young people may well suffer problems of depression in the future when other young people are dying from drug-related incidents today'."

But what about people like Marc who may be in need of help? His suicidal feelings grew until he was driven to seek psychiatric help at the Liverpool Drug Dependency Clinic where he was put on medication normally prescribed for schizophrenic. He is recovering, but is finding it hard to regain self-confidence.

Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of people continue to pill-pop every weekend. Their enjoyment is intense and instant. But what is the pay-back? To know its full extent we may have to wait another decade.



Tim Luffman, a customs officer, with a dwarf crocodile and a baboon's skull PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID SILLITOE

Souvenirs that can ruin a good holiday

TOURIST souvenirs made from endangered species form the lion's share of customs seizures at London airports, Customs and Excise officers said last week as they warned holidaymakers to be careful when buying gifts, *writes Alex Bellos*.

Thousands of souvenirs such as ivory chess pieces, jewellery made form coral, and crocodile skin handbags, are confiscated at airports every year from tourists unaware they are breaking the law. Such objects account for 85-90 per cent of seizures by customs officers, vastly overshadowing seizures of drugs.

Robin Cooper, head of policy at Customs and Excise, said many souvenirs legally on sale in foreign countries are covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) and banned from import to Britain.

He said: "We don't enjoy seizing souvenirs from tourists. It ruins their holidays and takes up our time. But we have no choice."

More than 800 species are banned from international trade and 23,000 are strictly controlled under Cites. These include many corals, reptiles, orchids and cacti, as well as elephants, tigers, rhinos and whales.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT would be the constitutional consequences if the heir to the throne declared he/she was an atheist?

THE legalist would say that a non-Protestant cannot be monarch under the 1688 Bill of Rights. The requirement that the monarch should be a Protestant was to prevent him/her becoming a Catholic.

But becoming an atheist these days would not entail an abrogation of British freedoms and there could be a case for amending the Bill of Rights by an Act of Parliament to allow an atheist monarch. — *Patrick White, London*

AS AN atheist, the new monarch could not take the oath, created by the Coronation Oaths Act 1688, by which he/she promises to maintain "the Protestant reformed religion established by law". And the Accession Declaration Act 1910 requires the new monarch to swear before Parliament that he/she is a "faithful Protestant" and will maintain "the enactments which secure the Protestant succession to the Throne". Parliament could try to repeal these acts before the atheist heir succeeded, but the existing monarch would have sworn the oath and declaration and so could not assent to their repeal. These are the only two acts in British law designed to prevent their own repeal.

One way round this conundrum is to have the repeal bill ready for the monarch's death. In common law, the monarchy is never vacant. The lawful heir inherits all the monarch's powers immediately on his/her death, before being crowned or making the Accession Declaration. So the atheist heir could immediately assent to the repeal bill and lawfully become an atheist monarch. — *Laurie Smith, Carshalton, Surrey*

WHY do some aircraft leave jet trails and others do not?

JET trails are also known as "vapour trails" and (more usefully) as "condensation trails". Air flows more quickly over the top of an aircraft's wing — otherwise it wouldn't fly — and in doing so it cools down and thins out, and can therefore hold less moisture. The moisture condenses into water droplets and what you see is like a long, thin cloud, which disappears as the air warms again to the temperature of the surrounding air.

So it all depends on the amount of moisture in the air, and the speed of the aircraft. With moist air and fast aircraft, we get trails. With dry air and/or slow aircraft, no trails. — *Ian Lewis, Farnham, Surrey*

ALASKA and Hawaii became the 49th and 50th states of the US only after the second world war. What was their sovereign status before that?

IMMEDIATELY before Hawaii achieved statehood in 1959, it was a Territory of the US. But it had been a sovereign constitutional monarchy until 1893, when the last Queen, Lili'uokalani, was deposed by US sugar planters and missionaries, with the support of the US marines. A few years after her overthrow, the islands were annexed. — *Alex Fenton, Honolulu, Hawaii*

ALASKA was a Russian colony from 1744 until the US bought it in 1867 for $7,200,000. It was made a state in 1959. — *Kyra Ings, Wickfield, Wiltshire*

WHY does the wedding ring go on the third finger of the left hand?

BREWER'S Dictionary of Phrase & Fable states: "Aulus Gellius tells us that Appianus asserts in his Egyptian books that a very delicate nerve runs from the fourth finger of the left hand to the heart, on which account this finger is used for the marriage ring." For Catholics, the thumb and first two fingers represent the Trinity, and the next finger "is the husband's, to whom the woman owes allegiance next to God. The left hand is chosen to show that the woman is to be subject to the man." — *Bob Harper, Gateshead*

Any answers?

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "doesn't cut the mustard"? — *Andrew Wong, London*

WHAT was Pelmanism? And what became of the Pelman Institute? — *Frank Toner, Glasgow*

CONSIDERING the hundreds of thousands of mines planted during the two world wars, can we assume that all of these are no longer dangerous? — *Alfred Christiansen, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://ng.guardian.co.uk/

Letter from Bamako Robert Lacville

Double trouble

WHAT man has not been tempted by the delicious prospect of polygamy? Having two wives. Or even three or four . . . Every 35-year-old man with 10 years of monogamy behind him thinks occasionally of an attractive second bed; and the percentages increase for fading 45-year-olds with adolescent children and a receding hairline.

I'm not talking about the "serial polygamy" practised in the West, where one in three marriages leads to divorce and remarriage. (I've heard politicians call it "serial monogamy", but they are just dressing it up in language acceptable to Christians.) No, I am talking about serious double-marriage, where the husband can strut around one compound on Monday and Tuesday, and then move down the road on Wednesday and Thursday, knowing that he'll be spoilt like mad because they haven't seen him for two days. More importantly, each wife will be as nice as possible in order to upstage the other.

Naturally I am giving you an urban vision of polygamy, where many wives demand separate lodgings. In the village, each wife has her own hut in the family compound. And so does the husband, who returns exhausted from the fields or the market and lounges around the compound, waiting for the duty-wife to bring him water for washing and oil for a relaxing massage.

It was Banussi, a woman from Botswana, who first taught me that polygamy is a cause of social stress and underdevelopment. Happily married to a Gambian friend of mine, she now lives in the Manding lands with two lovely children.

She told me of her shock in discovering the prevalence of polygamy in West Africa. "It is bad for economic prosperity as well as for family life," she said. When a visiting Ghanaian woman strongly supported Banussi's southern African perspective, I decided it was time to find out more.

The African Princess, firm in her views on most things, announced that there were no conditions in the world which would make her share a husband. She backed up her personal preference with case studies of family strife and unhappiness caused by jealousies between co-wives. This seemed a bit strange, since her own sister (same mother, same father) had just celebrated her marriage as a second wife. But both sisters agreed that jealousies between co-wives destroy their children's lives. Indeed I discovered that the Bambara word for "jealousy and rivalry" is *fadenya* which means "children of the same father".

The sisters explained that you cannot trust the children of your father. In West Africa it is the mother who is powerful. Children obey their mother. A co-wife will always seek to diminish the favours and chances of other children, in order to promote her own. You may help your half-siblings, but you don't trust them.

This is one reason for the failure of West African private enterprise to develop and expand; an enterprise dies with its founder. You may see a sign Barry Brothers above a shop, but it is rare indeed to see Barry and Sons, unless Mr Barry has only one wife. But that is unlikely if he is a successful businessman: after a wife and a house and a Peugeot car, the next prestige symbol for the urban affluent is a second wife.

MONOGAMY on the other hand promotes the virtues of "loyalty and trust" inherent in the word *baluma*, meaning children of the same mother, *ba*. Never has the importance of *baluma* hit me as it did last week when I found two small boys sleeping on the step of my garage door. Why, I wondered to myself, were the six- and eight-year-old kids sleeping on my step, when their own house is just two doors along?

It turns out that Jeneba, the third wife of my late and lamented neighbour Samake, who died two years ago, has remarried. These things can be very quick: it happened last week while I was up in Timbuktu. Jeneba is only about 30 years old, and she cannot live the rest of her life as a widowed second wife (the eldest wife died). She had a good offer, and she took it and the baby girl with her. The boys belong to their father's family, so they were left in their father's house.

Young Samake the welder, a nice man around 25 years old, is doing his best to be a good elder brother but admits that the boys are missing their mother. His own mother is not a naturally warm person and she has seven children of her own. *Fadenya* is such a strong force that Jeneba's boys will always get second best. Within a week of their mother's remarriage, they seem to reckon there is more love and favour to be received down the road.

They may be right.

A Country Diary

Brenda Owen

DUNKELD, Australia: We belong to a golf club which must be one of the most beautiful in the world, lying as it does among the low mountains of the Serra Range in Western Victoria.

There are times when the scores are high and the tempers are short but invariably nature comes up with a distraction. The wallabies will watch even the rotten shots without booing, and the cackle of the kookaburra does not impute praise or blame. At various times we have seen mating emus (a noisy procedure) and boxing kangaroos and been followed closely by willie wagtails catching the insects that our feet have disturbed. One highlight was the aerial ballet display by two rainbow bee-eaters who time and again swooped to the ground and rose again in beautiful symmetry, displaying their colours to perfection and, at the same time, scaring off a snake which was too close to their burrow.

Recently we lost two balls on the 9th which we had thought would be easily found. Infuriated we drove the 10th and as my ball came to rest a raven flew down from the trees, picked it up in its beak and made off for the eucalyptus beyond the fairway. Looks like we'll be shopping for orange golf balls.

Voice of America

OBITUARY
James Stewart

THERE was the unmistakable rangy figure and the forthright eyes, but you hear first in your head the immediately recognisable, most impersonated voice in the history of Hollywood — the languid yet adenoidal drawl.

It was a woodwind instrument able to express a wider range of emotions than most film stars: there was his euphonious high tenor singing of Cole Porter's "Easy to Love" in Born To Dance; the excitement as he feels a scream coming on in You Can't Take It With You; and the celebrated climactic filibuster from Mr Smith Goes To Washington, when the voice becomes raw and husky without ever losing passion or conviction.

More emblematically, James Stewart, who has died aged 89, was the voice of a certain kind of America. He was able, better than any other American screen actor, to express what was decent, honest and unpretentious about the US of A. "He grabbed you as a human being," Frank Capra remarked. "You were looking at the man, not an actor. You could see this man's soul."

This quality was used in different ways by the three most important directors in his career — Capra, Alfred Hitchcock and Anthony Mann. For Capra, he represented simplicity and rugged worth, while Hitchcock used his "familiarity". "It made him the perfect Hitchcock hero, because he is Everyman in bizarre situations." Yet Anthony Mann, in his westerns, discovered a grittier, more uncompromising and bitter Stewart than the charmer of the pre-second world war pictures.

There is some truth to the legend that James Stewart was a hick, born and brought up in a small town, where his father owned a hardware store. Except that Stewart's grandfather had built the store in Indiana, Pennsylvania into a thriving business, so that he could afford to send his son to Princeton. That son in turn sent his son, Jimmy, there.

As an Ivy-Leaguer, Jimmy joined the Triangle Club, Princeton's best theatre group, while taking his degree in architecture. Theatre led to small film parts, but it was his pre-war collaboration with Capra that brought out his unique qualities. Capra cast him as the banker's son in love with a woman (Jean Arthur) from an eccentric bohemian family in You Can't Take It With You. Then came Mr Smith Goes To Washington (1939), one of the most memorable performances of his career.

"You fight for the lost causes harder than for any others; yes, you even die for them," is the apogee of Jefferson Smith's 23-hour filibuster. The idealistic senator set Stewart's image firmly in the public's mind, and after the film, the star vowed: "A James Stewart picture must have two vital ingredients. It will be clean and it will involve the triumph of the underdog over the bully."

It was strangely ironic, many years later, to see Mr Stewart, a lifelong Republican, go to Washington to support Richard Nixon.

In 1940, nobody was more astonished than Stewart when he won the Academy Award — for his performance in The Philadelphia Story. There is no doubt that as Jefferson Smith, he had a more demanding assignment than his role as the reporter sent to cover the marriage of socialite Katharine Hepburn.

As soon as America entered the second world war, Stewart joined the Army Air Corps as a private, returning four years later a lieutenant colonel. He had flown 20 missions over Germany as a bomber pilot, winning the Air Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross.

Once more in civvies, stirred by his war experiences, he was seriously considering quitting Hollywood when Capra called him to say he had an idea for a movie. It was It's A Wonderful Life (1947). As George Bailey, a man driven to suicide unaware that he had touched many lives for the better, Stewart demonstrated his range from hopeful youth to desperate middle-age.

His roughening up happened mostly in the five westerns Stewart made with Anthony Mann in the fifties, including Winchester '73 (1950) and The Man From Laramie (1955). But the hardness of the



The perfect Everyman . . . Stewart with Grace Kelly in Rear Window

characters does not disguise the pain behind the eyes, and the tenderness within.

He was a middle-class middle-American caught up in an espionage plot, in a picaresque pursuit (one of Hitchcock's favourite themes) in The Man Who Knew Too Much (1955). And then he was the immobilised voyeur hero in Rear Window (1954), the audience's surrogate, watching murder helplessly. In Vertigo (1958), his righteous persona makes his acrophobic detective drawn into a world of fantasy and fetish compelling. It is also one of his rare demonstrations of sexual desire, with Kim Novak as the object of his attentions.

Stewart's wife Gloria, the wealthy divorcee whom he married in 1949, mother of their twin daughters, once said: "I can honestly say that in all the years we've been married, Jimmy never once gave me cause for anxiety or jealousy." There was never a whiff of scandal; the marriage lasted 45 years until her death.

There was a contrast between his liberal, often pacifist, screen persona and his hawkish stance on the Vietnam war, a view he shared with his friend John Wayne, with whom he appeared in John Ford's The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962), and in The Shootist (1976).

Yet stars' real lives are far less real to audiences than those they live on screen, and Stewart's backing for the Vietnam war, Nixon and Reagan will be long forgotten while Jefferson Smith and George Bailey go on moving and entertaining us.

Ronald Bergan

James Stewart; actor, born May 20, 1908; died July 2, 1997

Keeping it in the family

FILM OF THE WEEK
Derek Malcolm

THE SONS of famous film-makers have a hard row to hoe. None more so than Nick Cassavetes. His father, John Cassavetes (who died in 1989), was one of the most influential of all post-war American directors but almost impossible to emulate. Unhook The Stars, Nick's début, thankfully doesn't attempt to do so, even though it has Gena Rowlands, John's widow, in the leading role.

Where there are similarities, the comparison is not in Nick's favour. Rowlands plays a lonely suburban widow, with an ambitious son gone from home and a troublesome teenage daughter about to leave. She has little to live for until a working-class mother (Marisa Tomei, a single parent since her abusive husband left) asks her to look after her six-year-old son while she's earning a precarious living.

The child gradually begins to relish his visits to Auntie Mildred but the inevitable happens — the mother decides to move and the two have to part.

This is far more of a soap opera than John Cassavetes would have allowed, and the subplots — the prosperous son trying to get his mother to go to live with him and his wife, mother's romantic dinner with Gérard Depardieu's Canadian truck driver — and the burgeoning understanding between the single parent and the auntie are all routine Hollywood stuff.

But there is a perceptive screenplay from Cassavetes Jr (with Helen Caldwell) and acting, led by the incomparable Rowlands, which introduces some reality into the plot. Cassavetes has learnt from his father not how to tell a story, since the latter subjugated that to a general feeling of intense spontaneity, but how to give his cast the scope to surpass themselves.

Tomei gives one of her best, least mannered performances as the single mother, the boy is played with nice reticence by Jake Lloyd, Moira Kelly is excellent as the daughter and even Depardieu is constrained for once as Rowlands's French Canadian would-be lover.

But it is Rowlands who holds the attention, one of the greatest screen actors of her generation, as anyone who has seen A Woman Under The Influence would confirm.

She skilfully suggests, without going too twitchy, she needs the boy as much as he needs her. And she refuses to play the elderly angel but determinedly suggests a woman who must have been a pain both to her daughter and son and isn't likely to make the truck driver's life heaven either.

It's her presence that saves the film from its essential banality — that and Cassavetes's carefully unsentimental direction. Unlike his father, who had no concern with popularity and became a lauded hero only after his death, Cassavetes Jr is trying for the middle ground.

Dark star with a brooding screen presence

OBITUARY
Robert Mitchum

ROBERT MITCHUM, who has died aged 79, gave not the least help to the notion that he was a great screen actor. He manifested a heartfelt and weary certainty that acting was a dumb trick which he had got away with for years. If we were moved, that was our problem.

There was only one topic with which you could dent his cool, mocking armour, and that was The Night Of The Hunter (1955), which he blamed entirely on the wonder, the genius, and, of course, the folly of its director Charles Laughton.

Mitchum's crazed preacher Harry Powell in Hunter wasn't even nominated for an award. The picture was a disaster. Laughton never directed again. If you tried to convince Mitchum that he had done something uncanny and marvellous, he rolled his eyes and offered you a drink. This was the manner — sleepy-eyed yet dangerous, attentive but insolent, there yet uncommitted



Robert Mitchum: a world-weary boozer with an instinct for acting

— that made Mitchum a phenomenon in the late 1940s and 1950s.

For 10 years, he was murderously beautiful, and so fixed in underplaying you could imagine you heard his blood freezing, clicking into place as ice. He played tough, smart loners and his characters' attitude to their plots and problems was close to his fatalistic regard for his own career.

Mitchum encouraged his own bad reputation: as a kid he had done time on a chain gang; in Hollywood he was disrespectful to superiors and owners; and in 1948 he was arrested for possession of marijuana and spent 60 days in jail. Some people reckoned he was finished, but the public liked him all the more.

He seems like a wanderer from one of his own pictures: he was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut his father died when he was a young child; he was a difficult kid, a drifter and a vagrant. Shirley MacLaine (who was his lover for a time) said that the South marked Mitchum: it made him world-weary, a languid drawler, boozer, and hopeless case.

It was 1940, when he had just married his wife Dorothy Spence, with whom he had two sons and a daughter, that turned to acting. He was trapped, he said: the money was too good, the work too easy, for him to try harder. He had small roles in several films but won attention in 1945 as a tough, but sensitive soldier in William Wellman's The Story Of GI Joe. Uncommonly still, he seemed possessed of a dark experience beyond his years. He got a nomination as best supporting actor — the only one of his career.

From film noir, he graduated in the 1950s to lead roles in bigger pictures — River Of No Return, Not As A Stranger, The Sundowners, The Grass Is Greener. Although he worked too much and with too little care, there are the unexpected pictures he wandered into where he could be far sadder and much nastier: the relentless but insecure brother in Wellman's Track Of The Cat; the gloating, stalking figure in Cape Fear; the cuckolded teacher in Ryan's Daughter; and the most Chandlerian of all the Philip Marlowes in Farewell My Lovely.

Mitchum was a very Hollywood creation, incapable of self-reflection. Maybe he had an instinct that movies needed just a look, a presence and concealment for the magic to work.

David Thomson

Robert Charles Duran Mitchum; actor, born August 6, 1917; died July 1 1997

Manhattan nightlife during Harlem's heyday . . . Blues, 1929, by Archibald J Motley, Jr

And all that jazz

ART
Diran Adebayo

HARLEM. Harlem when it sizzled. Harlem when, in the words of writer Greg Tate, "the living knew they wanted to go to Harlem just as surely as the dead knew they wanted to go to Heaven!" Twenties Europe had its Paris and its Weimar, America its Harlem.

Twenties Harlem dubbed itself the "world's greatest negro metropolis". Millions had fled to New York from the South in the early 1900s, and the part that blacks had played during the first world war had contributed to a new assertiveness among them. But demands for jobs and justice were met with a murderous white backlash. Thousands of negroes were lynched across the country in the Red Summer of 1919.

It was in the aftermath of that summer that the renaissance began. Community leaders believed that the arts were the only safe haven on offer and might, marketed in the right salons, elevate the negro in the eyes of fellow Americans.

Curiously, there is no mention of the historical background at the London Hayward Gallery's show Rhapsodies In Black (until August 17), so that some of the grim irony in, for example, Aaron Douglas's art deco painting Aspiration is lost. And while we gain a sense of the international flavour of the renaissance, with film clips of Josephine Baker in Paris, the fierce debates around the politics of representation are only hinted at. In the words of Langston Hughes's quotation, which stands over the entrance to the exhibition, "If colored people are glad, we are pleased. If not, their displeasure doesn't matter, either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves."

The coloured people that Hughes had in mind were the bourgeois followers of W E B du Bois, an intellectual who wanted high art, not studies of Harlem low-life or the "primitive" work that some artists offered. This discussion over "positive/negative images", with the white gaze an omnipresent spectre, is an enduring issue for black Western artists. Who is your art for, the black and/or white consumer? Is the work for today, when racism and ignorance make it so easy for work to be seen in a peculiar light, or for a better tomorrow?

For the artists of the Harlem renaissance, such questions were especially vexed. Many artists relied on white patronage. They strove for a free vision denied most others, and yet they were as economically impotent as less privileged blacks.

Perhaps the most telling fact about the Harlem renaissance is that without the white establishment to name it so, it would not have been seen to have happened. The year 1925 saw the publication of Alain Locke's anthology The New Negro, with stories by young guns Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, illustrations by Aaron Douglas, and an invitation extended to white worthies such as Eugene O'Neill to judge the literary awards for the black arts magazine Opportunity. The worthies came, they hung out with the talent, and the resulting publicity, combined with the jazz that was already conquering America, set the Harlem ball rolling.

For me, the most moving aspect of the exhibits was thinking how difficult the lives of most of the subjects was. Many look noble and strong. Others have a sadness about them, a sense of troubled past and present, a blues aesthetic.

There are strands that link the renaissance with today. In Douglas's picture Defiance, we see the prototype of the modern mad and bad Rude Boy, as immortalised by Jimmy Cliff in the 1970s Jamaican film The Harder They Come. Van der Zee's photo of Harlem's Barefoot Prophet raises a smile too. Every black community seems to have one.

In the main, though, the impression is that myth was the reality of Harlem. All the strata of black life were there, and whites could come along to the party. There was also a tremendous intellectual strength: doctors and activists moved in the same streets as the low-life Plotters in Motley Jnr's paintings.

The black Britain of the nineties might be the nearest thing to inter-war Harlem. Second-generation Britons, many of whom grew up in similar inner-city areas, feel they have more in common than they have differences. But we still have to develop our Opportunity magazines, and to forge the kinds of alliances that give a renaissance a name.

Holy communion

THEATRE
Michael Billington

AFTER me, says the Anthony Blunt-like hero of John Banville's new novel, Poussin cannot be what he was before. Neil Bartlett might make a similar claim after the extraordinary, unclassifiable **Seven Sacraments of Nicholas Poussin**, which mixes art history, autobiography and meditation on matters of life and death.

The audience is ushered into a lecture theatre in the bowels of a Whitechapel hospital. Bartlett arrives in doctor's coat and proceeds to give us the historical background to Poussin's seven great paintings which hang in the National Gallery of Scotland. We learn that they were painted between 1644 and 1648, that they were originally meant to be viewed in solitude by the guests of Poussin's patron, and that they depict both biblical incidents and the sacraments of confirmation and extreme unction.

What starts as a lecture, however, quickly turns into something else. Bartlett explores the themes and visual motifs of each individual painting. He strikes poses, relates the works to his own experience, picks out details from the pictures which are then either projected on to a screen or highlighted in chalk sketches on a blackboard by the artist Robin Whitmore.

What is Bartlett up to? Running through the evening is a highly moving vein of religious nostalgia; a sense that we may well be the last generation that will understand the Book of Common Prayer or the rituals depicted in the Poussin paintings. One byproduct of a secularist society is that a whole world of religious art may soon become incomprehensible.

But Bartlett goes beyond that to suggest that the ceremonies depicted by Poussin still have some echo in our own experience. He dwells on baptism, confirmation, marriage in highly personal terms.

Bartlett achieves several things in this unique show. He illuminates Poussin's work in a way that makes one want to re-examine the original paintings. He also dwells on mortality. The final image, as we file into another room, is of Bartlett silently grieving over an empty hospital bed. But, best of all, he reminds us that anything is possible in theatre; not only that you can endlessly reinvent the form but that it is one of the places where a group of total strangers can foregather and be reminded, while being instructed and entertained, of their common humanity. Religious worship may be in decline, as Bartlett implies, but the act of theatre can become a form of holy communion.

Beckett's landmark play no longer excites great controversy. The days when critics argued over whether **Waiting for Godot** was a masterpiece (Harold Hobson) or a remarkable piece of twaddle (Bernard Levin) have more or less gone. But, if it is now widely accepted as a classic, Peter Hall's haunting and beautiful Old Vic production in South London shows precisely why.

The essence of a classic is that it constantly renews itself; and Hall, returning to the play after 42 years, finds new facets in Godot. All the familiar qualities are still there: Beckett's compassion for his two eternally waiting tramps, and the yearning for something that would give meaning to the endless cycle of life and death.

But Hall's production also brings out something rarely emphasised: Beckett's anger at life's cruelty and injustice. You see it here in the way Vladimir and Estragon lament the loss of their "rights" as if their contract with Godot involves a fundamental human forfeit. Above all, you see it in the play's most famous, endlessly repeated exchange: "Let's go." "We can't." "Why not?" "We're waiting for Godot." This is delivered with mounting frustration ending each time with a growl of despair from Ben Kingsley's Estragon. What Hall brings out is not just the pathos of the tramps' plight but their rage at their entrapment and at the senselessness of their predicament; and, of course, by extension ours too.

Each production of Godot is also determined by the chemistry of the casting. Here a perfect balance is struck between Alan Howard's willowy, Irish-accented, residually idealistic Vladimir and Ben Kingsley's earthy, ironic, pragmatic Estragon. Beckett's point is that the characters are indissolubly interdependent.

If you have only 15 shillings left in the world, said Hobson, go and see Waiting For Godot: if you have 30 shillings, go twice. Allowing for inflation, the injunction still applies. For what you get is not a philosophical tract but a poem, full of sadness, sympathy and rage, about the unanswerable riddle of existence.

Technowarrior with a humanist touch

PERFORMANCE
Tim Ashley

AS THE centrepiece of this year's Meltdown festival at London's South Bank Centre, Laurie Anderson, star, performance artist and the festival's artistic director, presented her one-woman show, The Speed Of Darkness, a bitter, funny, probing meditation on the nature and future of technology. It's a piece riddled with ambiguities that perplex because Anderson, tellingly and teasingly, makes no attempt to resolve them.

On one level, it represents a drastic simplification of her more recent work. The paraphernalia of her large-scale multimedia shows is conspicuous by its absence. Gamine and androgynous, she stands alone in pools of coloured light with only a synthesiser, a sound console and her electric violin for company. Her main medium is speech. What we hear is essentially a monologue, a lecture, underpinned by a steady stream of synthesised sound and interrupted by Bach-like violin chorales, amplified native American chants and the occasional song.

On another level, The Speed Of Darkness expands her previous material. The techno-hell of the US, that bleak, Oedipal vision of America as a crushing, maternal force, is extended to include global technocracy. The piece is an apocalyptic joke, envisioning the end of the world as we know it. Technology relentlessly destroys human nature and blurs individual identity.

Satellite link-ups obviate the need for personal contact. The person on the other end of the Internet is a mysterious stranger. We have returned to a primitive culture based on hunting and gathering, she claims, but what we now hunt and gather is information. The riffs allude to The Doors (The End, retroactively haunted by the napalm flares of Coppola's Apocalypse Now) and Jean-Michel Jarre's eco-conscious Zoolook (for which Anderson provided the vocals).



Laurie Anderson, perpetrator and victim PHOTO: LYNN GOLDSMITH

The disturbing irony, which Anderson exploits to the limit, is that her excoriation of technology is constantly undercut by her reliance on it. Simplified though her act may be, it is still dependent on complex electronics. Her grotesque vision of cybersex — people in rubber fetishwear, wired to electrodes, getting off on computer-generated porn — is followed by a jolting, gender-bending colloquy between her cool New York self and her own voice distorted by the microphone into an aggressive, masculine, Midwest drawl.

She envisions a culture in which all human experience can be controlled by the flick of a switch — yet one false move, one wrongly thrown switch, would silence her own voice for ever.

It's in her ability to portray herself as both perpetrator and victim of the nightmare she describes that Anderson's genius as an artist lies. It's powerful stuff, linking accessibility with profundity. This may be the best Meltdown to date.



Passages from India

James Wood

The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-1997
Edited by Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West
Vintage 578pp £7.99

WHY does the following comic sentence seem so Indian (at least, to a non-Indian)? "When he got home, he mixed and drank some Maclean's Brand Stomach Powder, undressed, got into bed and read some Epictetus." There is the salad of different registers, the Maclean's Stomach Powder mixed with Epictetus; there is the mock-heroic solemnity of the man described, his striving respect for the classical author (only in a periphery, a place far from the centre of power, would reading Epictetus be such an important rite); there is the rationed democracy of the sentence, whereby the man's aspirations are simultaneously sympathised with and mocked; there is the verbal exactness, the gong-like placing of "Epictetus" at the very end of the sentence; and there is the literary, rather formal, modelled feel of the comedy itself — here is a writer who knows his Sterne and Pope, his Gogol and Joyce.

V S Naipaul is its author; he is describing Mr Biswas's earnest bouts of self-education, far from London (his quarry) in Trinidad. Naipaul, according to a glancing comment in Salman Rushdie's introduction, asked to be excluded from this anthology. But the spirit of his comedy is everywhere in this book: over the 50 years of writing gathered here by Rushdie and Elizabeth West, the mild, harassed, panting comic vision of Mr Biswas begins to seem one of the true achievements of Indian fiction in English. Early in the anthology, for instance, we came across a story by Saadat Hasan Manto. The story is about the violent partition of India; comedy licks at the edges even of this tragedy: "One day a Muslim lunatic, while taking his bath, raised the slogan 'Pakistan Zindabad' with such enthusiasm that he lost his footing and was later found lying on the floor unconscious." Again one notes the staged, formal quality of this comedy: this is not just comedy about histrionics, but a comedy that is itself theatrical. Often in this marvellous book one discovers examples of Naipaul's doubleness, a comic sympathy on the part of the author which is also briskly satirical.

In Upamanyu Chatterjee's excellent story, "The Assassination of Indira Gandhi", a drop of comedy finds its way into a moment of menace: a Sikh family hear that Mrs Gandhi has been shot by her Sikh servants, and that anti-Sikh riots have begun. The father, Mr Kairon, ventures nervously to the local shop: "The grocer said, very gravely, 'Kairon Saab, your people ought not to have done this,' and overcharged him just a little." One notes the delightful precision of "very gravely" in that sentence.

Again and again, it is verbal fastidiousness of this kind that is the key to Indian comedy in English. For many Indian novelists, language is one of their fictional subjects: Rushdie turned the rhythms and compounds of Anglo-Indian speech into a modernist project in Midnight's Children. In the sublime passage from A Suitable Boy, Vikram Seth uses a local poetry meeting to burlesque pompous, high-flown Anglo-Indian. Such an interest is everywhere in Indian fiction.

These novelists see that the comic mutilation of language — parody, misuse, solecism — is part of its necessary literary evolution. It is only through abuse that there is advance: this may explain the general air of tolerance in Indian comedy.

The danger of Indian writing is this same volubility. Too much of it becomes slapstick. In his introduction, Rushdie mentions the influence of the writer G V Desani and his 1948 novel All About H Hatter, particularly for his zany and twirling prose. But to judge from the long extract here, Desani's prose is unbearably feverish. It says much about Rushdie's powers, stylistically and creatively, that Desani now reads like a grotesque parody of Rushdie.

It would be difficult for this book, which crosses so much terrain, not to have a few pebbles caught in its heel. There are failures. In general, the stories are weaker than the novel-extracts, and some are very slight — surprisingly, Anita Desai's is one. More generally, it would have been nice, for once, to have a book that did not elasticate the idea of fiction by including extracts from travel books and speeches, as this one does, and then call this dustball "writing". But there is no way in which a book that includes fiction by the cleanly talented Amit Chaudhuri; by Vikram Chandra; by the first novelist Arundhati Roy (a lovely blend of Rushdie and Joyce); and lingering non-fiction by Sara Suleri and Amitav Ghosh — could really stray from the marvellous. India surges in this book — monsoons, tamarind trees, dust, advertisements, hot politics, and language, language, language. The non-Indian British reader sees that Indian writers have managed to purchase an exquisite and necessary estrangement from their native land, so that all its textures seem to froth strangely to them. That is something non-estranged contemporary British writing must still learn.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £6.99 contact CultureShop (see below)

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Peter Stanford

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by Adrian Bailey
Cape 312pp £17.99

MANY moons ago when I used to work at the Catholic Herald, a reader sent in a series of photographs taken of his sitting room floor during and after it had been stripped. The paper didn't boast a DIY page, but the accompanying letter explained that the Virgin Mary had appeared in silhouette on the planks. The snaps were the proof. Except that I couldn't see anything other than a nice grain in the pine. I worried for a few minutes that I might be dismissing the next Lourdes phenomenon, then dictated a polite but firm no-thank-you letter and returned the material.

Perhaps I should have kept copies so that Mike Dash could add them to his unique archive of the extraordinary, alongside the 1926 photographs from the collection of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that he presents in Borderlands. These had been taken involuntarily by the camera of one Mildred Swanson in Seattle. It was pointing at a flower bed at the time, but took on a life of its own, clicked twice and produced strange images of Christ in the rogue frames.

Dash, publisher of the Fortean Times, chronicle of strange goings-on, has raided the back-numbers for Borderlands. The result is a colourful and enthralling inventory of odd happenings around the globe. Detail is all and commentary is minimal, just the occasional sentence linking one incident with another — on the next continent, in the previous century — plus brief summings up at the end of each section. After 500 pages, you end up breathless, disorientated and suspecting that you're the last sane being on earth.

Except Dash that is. For he makes it very plain with a minimum of adjectives sprinkled around the text that he considers most of the claims he has reported to be — in one of Ann Widdecombe's favourite phrases — bunkum. He does, however, sit on the fence. There may be something in it, he says, but it must be taken with a huge dose of salt.

In mirroring what is probably most people's stance on UFOs, bizarre sightings and things that go bump in the night, Dash's book should have you sitting on the edge of your seat yet leave you reassured enough to sleep at night. But somehow it just doesn't work. You are never sure whether the author is trying to write one of those maverick, encyclopedic and best-selling spiritual and historical quests that always include the pyramids and the Knights Templar, or whether he is conducting a proper scholarly investigation into that grey area that he defines as the "borderlands" between reality and fiction.

Adrian Bailey certainly cannot be accused of lacking focus or a theory to promote. His Caves Of The Sun explores the origins of mythology from the cave paintings of Neanderthal man, through the pagans of Stonehenge, the Greeks, the Romans and every other race that ever walked this planet, to the current day. Again there is a wealth of material, but here the touch is heavier, with Bailey's pet theory that an obsession with water and the sun lies behind the symbolism of most myths set out at regular intervals.

Of the two, Dash's text is by far the more engaging and entertaining because its tales are full of human interest. But Caves Of The Sun does challenge you to look afresh at some of the most mundane customs, language and rituals that are still part of our world.

According to Jim and Norm

John Sutherland

Quarantine
by Jim Crace
Viking 243pp £16.99

The Gospel According to the Son
by Norman Mailer
US edition: Random House 242pp $22.00 (published in the UK on September 18 by Little, Brown)

NOVELISTS, egotists all, yearn to novelise the gospels. Among those who have tried: Dickens, D H Lawrence, Nikos Kazantzakis. Coincidentally two living novelists — old lion Norman Mailer and rising star Jim Crace — have decided to retell the greatest story ever told.

A brief survey suggests that the Islamic mullahs are wise to prohibit, on pain of death and banishment from Paradise, any such retelling. What goes in is Gospel, what comes out is double-distilled. The gospels according to Jim and Norm are comically different from each other and seriously, not to say blasphemously, different from their synoptic source.

Crace concentrates his narrative on one of the more enigmatic episodes in the gospel narrative — Christ's 40 days in the wilderness. But novels have chronic problems with miraculous narrative: the medium instinctively humanises the Son of God. Quarantine pivots on a set of hinted rationalist objections. Crace's epigraph takes the form of a medical opinion: "An ordinary man of average weight and fitness embarking on a total fast . . . could not expect to live for more than thirty days, nor to be conscious for more than twenty-five." How, then, did Jesus ever get started on his saviour-of-the-world career?

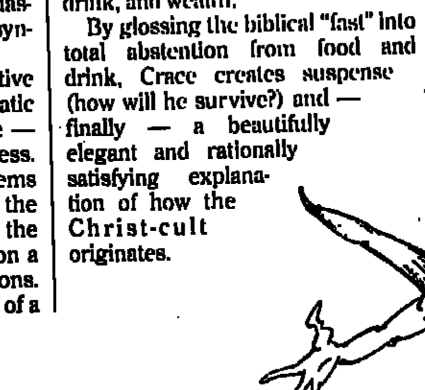
Crace's Jesus is a "boy", a weak-bladdered, under-size dreamer. He undertakes his 40-day retreat, or quarantine, in company with three Jewish zealots (a dying man, a barren woman, a mystic) and their Bedouin guide. For them, quarantine means fasting during the hours of daylight. For our hero, Gally, the fast is total.

Their path crosses with that of a pagan, and wonderfully mercenary, merchant, Musa, who has been left for dead. Gully comes on the apparently dying trader and mutters "Be well again" — a common greeting for the sick. "Miraculously" Musa does recover and is incorporated into Gally's hallucinations (not visions) as the devil, offering food, drink, and wealth.

By glossing the biblical "fast" into total abstention from food and drink, Crace creates suspense (how will he survive?) and — finally — a beautifully elegant and rationally satisfying explanation of how the Christ-cult originates.

Crace succeeds, if idiosyncratically. Mailer fails so flamboyantly that one has to love the old boy for trying. He tells the Son's story autobiographically — an advertisement for Himself. Mailer's Son is a master-carpenter who writes like a certain master novelist. He is no weak-bladdered wimp. He refutes the "fictions" of the evangelists "who gave me words I never uttered and described me as gentle when I was pale with rage". What the hell do these bozos ("fishermen", for Christ's sake) know about writing stories? Several chapters are given over to the 40 days in the wilderness. But Mailer's Son drinks copiously, and merely purifies himself as a kind of boxer's training for combative dialogues with a devil who is thoroughly out-argued.

There is no narrative, no suspense, no surprise — it's as familiar as a Sunday school lesson and all it has going for it is Mailer's overpowering rhetoric and macho bullying ... tions. No one does it better, but on this subject matter it simply doesn't work. Quarantine does.





Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Can Jane Eyre Be Happy? More Puzzles in Classic Fiction, by John Sutherland (Oxford World's Classics, £4.99)

FUNNY, you think, that this is published by OUP's World's Classics series; can it be afforded such status on only its first printing? This is a bit of sly marketing from Oxford, encouraging us to buy their editions. Professor Sutherland hit on the idea with Is Heathcliff a Murderer?, to which this is a sequel. The title should explain it all — it's a way of getting us to read texts closely again by asking us whether the authors screwed up with their continuity or not. On the whole, the authors are vindicated. This time round, the questions are: where does Fanny Hill keep her contraceptives? Why was Fagin hanged? Is Daniel Deronda circumcised? Why does Robinson Crusoe only see one footprint, and why isn't it washed away? You get the idea.

The Neanderthal Enigma: Solving the Mystery of Modern Human Origins, by James Shreeve (Penguin, £8.99)

THE great thing about not being a scientist is that you do not have to get into fights with other scientists; and one of the most entertaining of this book's sub-plots — ironically enough, since it deals with a race popularly imagined as beetle-browed savages bashing each other over the head with clubs — is that of the intense and sometimes violent rivalry between people with different opinions about Neanderthals. Were they like us? Were they dumb? Smart? Who knows? Great book, though. Good line: "One thing you can count on with humans — whether they can interbreed or not, the first thing they do when they meet is try to find out."

High Noon, by Phillip Drummond (BFI Film Classics, £6.99)

VERY good on the history of the film's production, its reception, and its context in terms of Hollywood. Not so good in exegesis. Drummond would appear to be in thrall to the kind of academic idiolect which is an aid to anti-thought and brings on the dry heaves. Chapter headings include "Sexual Politics", "Differing the Western" and "Femininities". A publicity shot of the four main actors is subtitled "Gender iconography". No, please, uurgh.

Mystery Train, by Greil Marcus (Plume, £8.99)

THE book you should get to keep Marcus's new book about Dylan company. This one deals with Sly Stone, Randy Newman, The Band, and, of course, Elvis; as well as Harmonica Frank, who might have invented rock 'n' roll, only no one's heard of him. Regular readers will know how much reverence I have for Marcus (I seem to have inadvertently named my son after him.) This might even be his best book.

Sister of mercy

Chris Mullin

No Faith in the System
by Sister Sarah Clarke
Mercier Press 218pp £9.99

ANYONE who has taken an interest in the celebrated miscarriages of justice that rocked the British establishment five years ago will know of Sister Sarah Clarke.

For years she has been a familiar face on the fringe of many of the big terrorist trials, ferrying bewildered relatives between airports, courts and maximum security prisons. Taking food parcels to remand prisoners, finding lawyers, fixing up accommodation, lobbying relentlessly to mitigate the excesses perpetrated by the British state in the name of combating terrorism.

Somewhere deep in the bowels of MI5 there will be a thick file on the activities of this subversive little nun. Although, as she says, she has never knowingly broken any law or prison regulation, she is forbidden to visit, and in some cases even to correspond with, most of the prisoners she has done so much to help.

Three years ago, following the escape of several IRA men from Whitemoor prison, she was visited by Special Branch officers who insisted on finger-printing her. This despite the fact that she was almost blind and in her mid-70's.

Sarah Clarke was born in rural Ireland into another culture and another age. "Our heroes weren't pop stars. They were saints." At the age of 20 she went into a convent where the regime resembled that of a maximum security prison. Liberation came with transfer to England and, incredibly, enrolment as a student at the Chelsea School of Art. It was a time of the Beatles, free love, the Second Vatican Council — and the Civil Rights Movement in Ireland. With the permission of her superiors (who seem to have been more enlightened than just about everyone else she came across in the Catholic Church), Sister Sarah signed up.

In the 1970s, after IRA bombs started going off in England, Sister Sarah, together with several courageous Catholic priests in Ireland, started doing what she could to assist the families of those arrested in connection with the bombings. "Our motives", she says, "were humanitarian, not political".

That was not, of course, how the authorities saw it. Nor, to be fair, is it strictly true. Every page of this book reeks of politics. And why not? No discussion of Ireland or its corrupting effect on the British criminal justice system can avoid politics.

The book is replete with graphic examples of the cruelty and humiliation casually meted out to guilty and innocent alike — and to their families. There are excellent chapters on the devastating impact of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and on the terrible death of Giuseppe Conlon, which finally caused the outside world to take a closer interest in what passes for British justice.

It is a powerful story. If I have any quarrel with Sister Sarah, it is that her book would have benefited from a few robust paragraphs on the wickedness of placing bombs in public places, whatever the cause. An equally harrowing account could be written of the impact on the lives of people, English and Irish, by the bombs placed by some of the young men and women whom Sister Sarah helped in their hour of need.

Sister Sarah . . . humanity that cannot avoid the political

Chris Mullin is MP for Sunderland South. His book Error Of Judgement: The Truth About the Birmingham Bombings was updated and reissued in paperback earlier this year (Poolbeg, £9.99)

Rimbaud the wanderer

Tim Atkin

Somebody Else: Arthur Rimbaud in Africa 1880-91
by Charles Nicholl
Cape 335pp £18.99

"THERE is no one here and yet there is someone," wrote Arthur Rimbaud in his poem, "Nuit de l'Enfer". The paradox is appropriate. Rimbaud's short but restlessly eventful life was a series of disappearances and identity shifts. A schoolboy poet of bewildering genius, Rimbaud abandoned literature at the age of 20 in favour of other *métiers*: mercenary, trader, gun-runner, photographer, circus cashier, scientist and foreign correspondent.

From his first teenage wanderings, Rimbaud was a man in flight, "freer than the freest", in the words of his one-time lover, the poet Paul Verlaine. Rimbaud's peregrinations took him to Java, Cyprus, the Cape and Abyssinia as well as Europe.

Charles Nicholl's fascinating new book concentrates on the last third of Rimbaud's life, the so-called wilderness years in East Africa and Arabia between 1880 and 1891. These are far less familiar than the poet's scandalous European adolescence: the absinthe, the visionary poems, the affair with Verlaine, the tiresomely thuggish behaviour. Rimbaud the poet was a destructive piece of work: mad, bad and very dangerous to know.

The African years are difficult to reconstruct and have been sparsely treated by Rimbaud's biographers. Today in Harar, Rimbaud's East African base, the poet is frequently confused with Sylvester Stallone's Rambo. Nicholl's skill as a literary gumshoe, sharpened in previous books on Marlowe and Raleigh, is well suited to the lack of evidence. Part travel book, part history and supposition, his book uses memoirs, reports, diaries and Rimbaud's surprisingly unimaginative letters to tempt the writer from the shadows.

This is not a study of the poems, but Nicholl introduces them skilfully as a gloss on the life. They certainly provide relief from the correspondence, a litany of whinges and peremptory demands: "People who keep on saying that life is hard should come and spend a bit of time out here, to take a lesson in philosophy." As Albert Camus commented, the legend of Rimbaud the mystic poet cannot withstand the impact of the letters.

Though he moaned, about the heat, the food, the boredom and the natives, Rimbaud was anything but inactive. He was a breathless autodidact. He mastered Arabic, as he had several other languages. He also went off "trafficking in the unknown", enduring long and potentially fatal trips as a trader and gun-runner.

Africa changed Rimbaud. Gone was the sneering, blue-eyed boy-poet, replaced by the raconteur, the businessman and the traveller — what Nicholl calls a "luminous ordinariness". News of his growing literary fame in Paris was an irrelevance. He had ceased to be a poet.

Africa also killed him. He was old and grey-haired at 32, and suffered repeatedly from fever, malaria, exhaustion, dysentery, rheumatism and, like any self-respecting French poet, syphilis (which almost certainly caused the synovitis which led to his leg being amputated in a Marseille hospital). He died aged 37 after months of grounded frustration, followed by acute pain and finally delirium.

Rimbaud's fear of stasis never left him. "I should like to wander over the face of the whole world," he told his sister, Isobelle, "then perhaps I'd find a place that would please me a little." The tragedy of Rimbaud's later life, superbly chronicled by Nicholl, is that he never really did.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £14.99 contact CultureShop (see page 28)

Agent of lost politik

Richard Norton-Taylor

Man Without a Face: The Memoirs of a Spymaster
by Markus Wolf, with Anne McElvoy
Cape 367pp £17.99

SHORTLY after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Markus Wolf, East Germany's notorious intelligence chief, received a visit from a senior minister in the newly-elected caretaker government in East Germany. He was offered immunity from prosecution in return for revealing the names of his agents in the West. "I'll leave it to others to do the betraying", Wolf replied.

Wolf was then approached by two senior CIA officers. He was offered sanctuary in California in return for spilling the beans on East German and Russian agents in the US. Six years later, he was refused a US visa on the grounds that he had dealt with terrorists.

There are echoes here of how British and US intelligence agencies recruited former Nazis after the second world war to help them fight the new enemy, communism. But Wolf turned down the CIA's offer as well. In 1993, he was convicted of treason and espionage. "Which country was I supposed to have betrayed?", he asked. It was a good question. Two years later, the German constitutional court cleared him on the grounds that as a citizen of East Germany, he could not have betrayed West Germany, then a foreign country. But German prosecutors fought back and in May the man who ran hundreds of agents for 34 years was convicted of kidnapping and given a two-year suspended prison sentence.

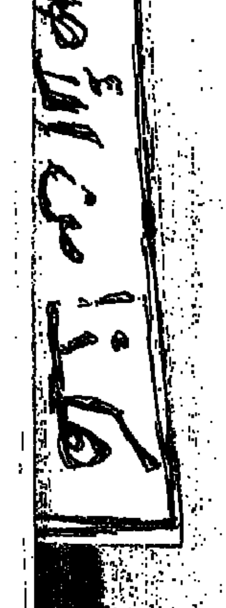
This charming, manipulative "man without a face", so-called because for 20 years the West had no photograph of him, succeeded in achieving almost cult status, in the West as well as the East. The reason is clear. "If I go down in espionage history, it may well be for perfecting the use of sex in spying", he says, referring to his Romeo spies — the male counterparts to Mata Hari who would seduce impressionable female secretaries in key positions in the West German government.

One of his greatest coups was the recruitment of Gunter Guillaume, who became one of Willy Brandt's closest advisers and whose arrest led to the downfall of the charismatic Social Democrat chancellor and architect of West Germany's Ostpolitik, of detente with the East. Wolf now describes the Guillaume case as a great defeat. "Our role in bringing down Brandt", he says, "was equivalent to kicking a football into our own goal."

Wolf confirms that Britain relied on West German intelligence services' intercepts during the Falklands war — they were the only ones able to decode Argentina's radio traffic. There are insights into how the Stasi, East Germany's state security apparatus, operated, and into its relations with Moscow.

But this is a disingenuous and curiously disappointing book. Time and again, Wolf distances himself from his boss, Erich Mielke. "I considered my own work in foreign intelligence to be a separate and more defensible sphere of activity, but I could not help but be ashamed at the brutal tactics against internal opposition and those whose only desire was to leave the country", he writes.

Wolf ends by insisting he has not lost his faith in Marxism. The evidence of the preceding 300-odd pages suggests he lost it years ago.



Badger among the bluebells

Mark Cocker

IN THE west the drizzle blurred the dark bulk of Criffel mountain. Way to the south, across the Solway Firth, I could see great black ranges of cloud slowly engulfing the Lake District. It was foul weather and as I entered a small wooded vale in southwest Scotland I was enveloped by its gloom.

All the way down the wood's steep banks was a covering of bluebells. Earlier in the spring they would have formed a luxurious mauve carpet, but the flowers had now long since withered and the plants had been converted by prolonged rain to a treacherous greasy mat. I slithered to a clearing where a group of elms had succumbed to Dutch elm disease. Although their skeletons still stood there was no canopy, and the evening light had broken in to scoop out a murky glade within the woodland's deeper shadow.

It was just enough to illuminate the surroundings. I could make out, for instance, the wood's dominant mix of sessile oak, hazel and ash. Many of the trees had also been coppiced — cut down at the base and then allowed to regrow as a spray of smaller trunks. This technique was the basis of broadleaved-woodland management from the time of the Saxons. Today, unfortunately it only survives in rare cases, since most of our wood and timber requirements are met by sterile, regimented plantations of conifer, which now blanket much of the Scottish uplands.

This spot typified those changes in woodland practice. It had probably not been coppiced since the second world war, although the thickness of some of the remaining oak stools suggested that it may well have been a working wood before the French Revolution. There were also other compelling signs of its age, but they had not been created by humans. For this narrow copse, no more than 200 metres across, was a badger wood, and they were the reason for my visit on such a disagreeable evening.



ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

On the far slope I could see their sett — an elaborate complex of tunnels which had as many as a dozen different entrances. From these, over the decades, the badgers have excavated great mounds of earth and on top again they had heaped an assortment of old bracken fronds, twigs and bluebells stalks which had served them as bedding. Then from the sett radiated numerous clearly defined paths that eventually subdivided into lesser trails.

At intervals along them I could make out more precise evidence of nightly forays. Beneath a large holly were the shallow pits that serve them as a latrine. Elsewhere the bluebells had been grubbed out where an individual had snuffled for worms. On some tree roots were deep scratch marks. On others there were wisps of grizzled hair. These details suggested their most recent activities but it also gave insights into a deeper past — a relationship between the dale, its trees and its badgers that has possibly continued unbroken for hundreds of years.

Then one of them popped into view. It trundled down a steep bank towards the stream, its coat dank and flattened to the body by rain. It paused briefly to roll a piece of wood in its forepaws and then vanished from sight.

Later, through the drizzle and gloom, I could hear the beast clattering around in an old refrigerator that had been dumped in the wood bottom. An interest in wildlife is never just about success, and despite enduring two more evenings of incessant midges and summer rain, those brief experiences were to be our only apparent reward.

Chess Leonard Barden

AT HALFWAY in the Leigh circuit, Britain's individual league for congress players, three grandmasters are in serious contention for the main award, the £3,000 Grand Prix. Mark Hebden took the lead at Hastings and Southend, but the Sutton-based Croatian Bogdan Lalic has almost caught up by winning at Walsall and Aintree.

Hebden has the best chance, because Lalic rarely wins tournaments with maximum points, while Michael Adams in third place will have the new knockout Fide world championship as his year-end priority. But if you play in congresses, watch Lalic's games, which are often easy to understand with a subtle harmony of strategy and tactics. This win is from Aintree, the only chess congress in the world played on a racecourse.

D Tebb v B Lalic

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 f4 Qc7 7 Nf3 Nbd7 8 Bd3 g6 9 0-0 Bg7 10 Qe1 b5 11 e5? White's 6 f4 formation against the 5 . . . a6 Najdorf Sicilian normally plans an attack by Qh4, f5 and Bh6, so advancing the e pawn is premature.

dxe5 12 fxe5 Ng4 13 e6 fxe6 14 Qe4 If 14 Qxe6 Nde5 15 Qd5 Bb7 harasses the queen, but material stays level. Instead, White goes for an illusory rook-knight fork.

Qa7+ 15 Kh1 Ngf6 16 Qh4 Nc5 17 Be3 Qc7 18 Bf4 Qb7 19 Rad1 0-0 20 Bh6 Nxd3 21 cxd3 Nb5 22 Bxg7 Rf4! Gaining time to double rooks.

23 Qg5 Kxg7 24 Qe5+ Kg8 25 Ne2 Rf5 26 Qe3 Bd7 27 Ned4 Rf6 Black's extra doubled pawn blends well with Lalic's occupation of key light squares. White should sink his own knights on dark squares, so 28 Ne5! is now the best way to resist rather than trying to regain the pawn.

28 Ng5? Raf8 29 Rxf6 exf6! 30 Ne4 A sorry retreat, but if 30 Ngxe6 Rc8 31 Nc5 Qd5 32 Ne4 Qxa2 (simpler than f5 33 Nc3) and Black is a pawn up again.

e5 31 Nb3 Qd5 32 Rc1 Nf4 33 Rc7 f5 34 Nbc5 fxe4 35 Rxd7 Nxd3! A neat finishing touch. If 36 Rxd5 Rf1+ 37 Qg1 Nf2 mate.

36 Kg1 Qxc5 37 Rxd3 Qc2! 38 Resigns

Susan Lalic, meanwhile, who has won the women's Prixette 10 times, is finding it harder this year against the teenage talents Ruth Sheldon and Harriet Hunt. And elsewhere, Luke McShane, the world's youngest IM at 13, leads the Junior Prix, though I expect Scotland's Jonathan Rowson to win.

But the most competitive event of all is the Leigh Amateur Prix for grading-limited tournaments, in which 20,000 UK players take part each year. The top score so far is a modest 72 per cent, as against the 95 per cent usually needed for the title. Any Guardian reader who plays in congresses and aims for maximum points in each tournament has a real chance.

No 2480

White mates in two moves, against any defence (by F W Wynne, 1903). Wynne was an unknown, but his clever solution won a first prize.

No 2479: 1 . . . Qe2 2 Qg4! Qxf1+ 3 Kh2 and mates by 4 Qxg6 or 3 . . . g5 4 Qf5.

Quick crossword no. 374

Across

1 Fish-hawk (6)
4 Grate — predicament (6)
8 Hit — nail (5)
9 Feast (7)
10 Commonplace (7)
11 Penetrate (5)
12 The Rock (9)
17 Male relative (5)
19 Make the most of — an adventure (7)
21 Persevere (7)
22 Rise — and dress (3-2)
23 Prize (6)
24 Faithless — erroneous (6)

Down

1 Busy — tenant (6)
2 Lengthen (7)
3 Additional (5)
5 Capacity — to please (7)
6 Grown-up (5)
7 Whole (6)
9 Romanian capital (9)
13 Defect (7)
14 Cockerel (7)
15 Church rostrum (6)
16 Russian plain (6)
18 Freight (5)
20 Heathen (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

I PLAY most of my tournament bridge in the US, and for the past seven years I have played in major events with Seymon Deutsch, Michael Rosenberg, Chip Martel and Lew Stansby. Seymon is a close friend, and his story is as close to a fairy tale as you will find in bridge. He renewed his passion for the game after an absence of 20 years and went on to play in three world-ranking events, winning two of them and finishing second in the third.

This year, he will have the chance to leave the game he loves on the highest possible note. Announcing that 1997 would be his last year in bridge at the top level, he led our team to victory in the American trials for the Bermuda Bowl, the championship of the world. He has the chance, in Tunisia later this year, to become the first player ever to hold the three major world titles concurrently — Rosenblum teams champion, Olympic champion and world champion.

In the final of the US trials, we met the team that has dominated American and world bridge for the past decade and more. Regular readers will know that "Meckwell", as the partnership of Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell is universally known, have achieved their phenomenal success in large part because of their highly efficient and scientific bidding methods. It was a shock — though a very pleasant one — when the system ran aground on this deal. Game all, dealer East:

North
♠ 10
♥ K Q J 6 5
♦ Q 6 2
♣ A 10 8 4

West
♠ K 8 2
♥ 10 9 4 2
♦ J 9 7 4
♣ 6 2

East
♠ A J 9 7 3
♥ A 8
♦ 10 8 5 3
♣ 5 3

South
♠ Q 6 5 4
♥ 7 3
♦ A K
♣ K Q J 9 7

This was the bidding:

South	West	North	East
M'stroth	Zia	R'well	R'berg
1♦[1]	Pass	1♥	1♠
2♣	Pass	2♠[2]	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦[3]	Pass	4♥	Pass
4NT[4]	Pass	5♥[5]	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	Content

1 Meckwell use the Precision system, reserving an opening bid of 1♣ to show a strong hand and 2♣ to show a six-card suit, so Jeff had to start with the "catch-all" one diamond opening.
2 Creating a game force, intending to support clubs later.
3 A cue bid with clubs agreed as trumps.
4 Blackwood, but denying a spade control, which would have been shown by a bid of 4♠.
5 A spade control and one ace.

A problem that besets many pairs, the best in the world among them, is that when clubs are trumps, it is dangerous to use Blackwood when holding only one ace, since if partner also has only one, his response of five diamonds will carry the side to too high a contract.

This, with a slight variation, was what happened here. Though Jeff and Eric were able to pinpoint the fact that they controlled the spade suit, they could not avoid the trap of six clubs with two aces missing. Were we lucky? Yes, we were, but lucky teams are also teams of destiny. For Deutsch's sake, we hope that our destiny will be fulfilled in Tunisia.

Cricket Third Test: England v Australia

Australia square series

Mike Selvey at Old Trafford

PROVIDED the weather held up there was never any doubt that Australia, having done the hard work on Sunday evening, would wrap up victory in this match. Indeed, lunch was still half an hour away when Andrew Caddick, after some defiant blows, flicked a tame catch to mid-on to concede defeat by 268 runs.

All out for 200, of which John Crawley made 83 before stepping on his stumps, England had lost their remaining five wickets in less than 23 overs for the addition of 70 runs. They were hustled out not by Shane Warne, as might have been expected on a dry, wearing pitch, but by another cracking display of aggressive, in-your-face pace bowling from Glenn McGrath. The two bowled unchanged on Monday.

The defeat was cataclysmic, but not as bad as the 329-run walloping inflicted in Perth the last time England lost an Ashes Test nor the 295-run indignity inflicted in Melbourne earlier in that series. It brought to an end an unbeaten England run of seven matches.

England are essentially resilient and make life tougher for the opposition than once they might, so although Australia left Manchester on a high note — odds-on now to keep the Ashes, according to the bookies — they know that the situation can change in no time. These remain two well-matched outfits, with Steve Waugh, an inevitable Man of the Match, the difference this time.

McGrath, though, was superb. Bowling from the Stretford End, he found his rhythm more effectively than at any time in the game and took the first four wickets to fall. Had he not encountered one of umpire Venkataraghavan's more inscrutable shakes of the head in response to a confident leg-before appeal against Caddick he would have had the full house. Instead the *coup de grâce* was left to Warne, and McGrath walked off with the wickets of Mark Ealham, Robert Croft, Crawley and Darren Gough. His figures of four for 46 in the innings, gave him seven in the match and a remarkable 18 in the series so far.

But nobody, least of all McGrath and Jason Gillespie, who knocked the top off the innings on Sunday, could fail to acknowledge the influence exerted by the genius at the other end. Warne's second-innings three for 63 was not the carnage that many anticipated after his six-wicket first-innings haul but he preyed on the mind. Whether or not taking wickets, he always represents a threat.

Only Mark Butcher, who played him off the pitch, Crawley, who tends to read him from the hand, and to some extent Ealham, who appears unsure which way to handle him but hangs in there anyway, played Warne with anything like confidence.

Crawley produced his best innings for England. On the fourth day he had reached 53, profiting from some wayward wrist spin from Michael Bevan, whose place must be in jeopardy after further indifferent batting. He had taken the seventh-wicket partnership with Ealham to 74 before McGrath, in his fifth over of Monday morning, struck the first blow, Ealham's edge flying low to Ian Healy, who just got a glove under the ball to pull off a stunning catch.

McGrath then proceeded to give poor Croft such a working-over once more that one fears for the Glamorgan man's safety in the Caribbean this winter. The catch he prodded to backward short leg was a formality.

All the time, though, Crawley was making jaunty progress, three times hitting Warne to the boundary. He had a century in his sights when he pushed McGrath into the covers and in pushing off for a run caught his off stump with his right heel. First Atherton at Lord's and now Crawley; England have been haemorrhaging wickets lately without giving them away like this.

Rain and bad light cut the opening day's play by 21 overs, but failed to prevent Steve Waugh from reaching his first century of the tour. Dean Headley's first appearance for England gave Test cricket, now in its 121st year, its first three-generation dynasty. He marked his debut by removing all three left-handers in the Australian top order.



McGrath celebrates as Crawley steps on his stumps TOM JENKINS

Waugh was out on the second day for 108 and Australia's first innings closed on 235. England were quickly in trouble once Warne cast his sorcerer's spell. Only Butcher offered any resistance with 51. England ended the day on 161 for 8.

The tourists dominated the third day completely, first by dismissing the home side with the addition of only one run to the overnight total and then going on to make 262 for 6. Taylor declared on 395 for 8 on Sunday, Steve Waugh having completed his second century, and had England in trouble for a second time with Warne and Gillespie in devastating form.

Scoreboard

AUSTRALIA
First Innings

M A Taylor c Thorpe b Headley	2
M T G Elliott c Stewart b Headley	40
G S Blewett b Gough	8
M E Waugh c Stewart b Ealham	12
S R Waugh b Gough	108
M G Bevan c Stewart b Headley	7
A Healey c Stewart b Caddick	9
S K Warne c Stewart b Ealham	3
P R Reiffel b Gough	31
J N Gillespie c Stewart b Headley	0
G D McGrath not out	0
Extras	16
Total	235

Bowling: Gough 21-7-52-3; Headley 27.3-4-72-4; Caddick 14-2-52-1; Ealham 11-2-34-2; Croft 4-0-13-0.

ENGLAND
First Innings

M A Butcher st Healy b Bevan	51
M A Atherton c Healy b McGrath	5
A J Stewart c Taylor b Warne	30
N Hussain c Healy b Warne	13
G P Thorpe c Taylor b Warne	3
J P Crawley c Healy b Warne	4
M A Ealham not out	24
R D B Croft c S Waugh b McGrath	7
D Gough lbw b Warne	1
A R Caddick c M E Waugh b Warne	15
D W Headley b McGrath	0
Extras	9
Total	162

Bowling: McGrath 23.4-9-40-3; Reiffel 9-3-14-0; Warne 30-14-48-6; Gillespie 14-3-39-0; Bevan 8-3-14-1.

AUSTRALIA
Second Innings

M T G Elliott c Butcher b Headley	11
M A Taylor c Butcher b Headley	1
G S Blewett c Hussain b Croft	19
M E Waugh b Ealham	55
S R Waugh c Stewart b Headley	116
M G Bevan c Atherton b Headley	0
I A Healy c Butcher b Croft	47
S K Warne c Stewart b Caddick	53
P R Reiffel not out	45
J N Gillespie not out	28
Extras (b1, lb13, nb6)	20
Total (for 8 dec, 122 overs)	395

Bowling: Gough 20-3-62-0; Headley 29-4-104-4; Croft 39-12-105-2; Ealham 13-3-41-1; Caddick 21-0-69-1.

ENGLAND
Second Innings

M A Butcher c McGrath b Gillespie	28
M A Atherton lbw b Gillespie	21
A J Stewart b Warne	1
N Hussain lbw b Gillespie	1
G P Thorpe c Healy b Warne	7
J P Crawley hit wicket b McGrath	83
M A Ealham c Healy b McGrath	9
R Croft c Reiffel b McGrath	7
D Gough b McGrath	1
A Caddick c Gillespie b Warne	17
D W Headley not out	0
Extras	20
Total	200

Bowling: McGrath 21-4-46-4; Reiffel 2-0-8-0; Warne 30.4-8-63-3; Gillespie 12-4-31-3; Bevan 8-2-34-0.

Umpires: G Sharp and S Venkataraghavan.
Australia won by 268 runs

Rugby Union

Lions lose their way in Wonderland

Robert Armstrong in Johannesburg

THE third Test resembled one of those TV quiz shows in which everyone wins a prize irrespective of how well or how badly they perform. The Springboks won plaudits for blowing away the Lions 35-16; the Lions captain Martin Johnson was given a glitzy trophy for winning the series 2-1; and the raucous British supporters earned brownie points for unswerving commitment.

In the Alice in Wonderland atmosphere that held a crowd of 61,000 in thrall at Ellis Park it would not have been surprising to see a Mad Hatter's award to those Lions who abandoned all pretence of discipline, pursued their own version of the Eton Wall Game and made disastrous errors that handed victory to the Springboks on a plate. Amid the general euphoria that dominated the closing stages of their 13-match tour the Lions should not forget they came within a point of a record Test defeat.

But a series win is a series win even if the Boks did finish with nine tries to three and 66 points to 59 over the three Tests. When the Lions arrived here the bookmakers were offering odds of 5-1 against them winning a Test, never mind the series. No one would have put money on them winning 11 matches.

"Gaining respect was a theme I tried to convey to the players," said Ian McGeechan, the coach, who has won five out of nine Lions Tests in the past nine years. "We stopped South Africa playing in areas where they expected to have an advantage and, I think, our players also moved up two gears. It was important that we had respect for South Africa, its rugby and its players right through the squad. If we had taken anything for granted we would have been finished."

Ironically the Lions did appear to assume they could fling the ball about at Ellis Park without having established a platform of control against a Springbok pack that played out of its collective skin. The predictable outcome was that the tight Lions defence that dogged out a win in the first two Tests struggled to keep its shape and finally collapsed, conceding 15 points in the final quarter.

The Springboks went 13-0 ahead in only 17 minutes and, though Neil Jenkins clawed back three excellent penalties, the hosts surged 23-9 in front after the break, Gary Teichmann's men, unlike the Lions, showing every sign of being able to score tries with the same directness they had displayed in Cape Town and Durban.

For their part the Lions found it a great deal harder to develop through successive phases of attack than to defend in depth and, even though they did get back to 23-16 with a superb try by Matt Dawson, the Springboks still had plenty in reserve with which to close out the match.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Boardman back from the front

CHRIS BOARDMAN of Britain took the second Tour de France yellow jersey of his cycling career when he achieved a two-second victory over Jan Ullrich of Germany in the opening prologue time trial at Rouen.

Ullrich, the 23-year-old German, was 44th of 198 starters and he set a time of 8min 22sec for the 4.5-mile course. He looked the winner for most of the event as one favourite after another failed to match his speed.

Boardman, watched by an estimated crowd of 200,000, started very fast and was two seconds ahead of Ullrich at the three-mile point. He held that advantage all the way to the finishing line.

But the 28-year-old Briton's joy was short-lived as Italy's Mario Cipollini stole a march and the *maillot jaune* from him at the end of Sunday's 120-mile first stage. "There was no way I was going to be able to take on Cipollini," said Boardman.

MIKE TYSON'S purse for the World Boxing Association's heavyweight bout in Las Vegas late last month was frozen pending a decision on the disciplinary action he should face after biting the title-holder Evander Holyfield. The Nevada State Athletic Commissioners ordered the promoter Don King to provide a cheque for $29,824,600 — equal to Tyson's purse — to be deposited in an account until they have completed their hearing. The 31-year-old Tyson was disqualified in the third round after he bit off part of the 34-year-old champion's right ear.

JACQUES VILLENEUVE is to leave Williams at the end of next season to join the Reynard grand prix team, the top British IndyCar constructor who will make its Formula One debut in 1999. Villeneuve won the 1995 IndyCar title in a Reynard and is currently second in the F1 world championship. He will be its No 1 driver and also a shareholder in the enterprise alongside the team's sponsor, British-American Tobacco, and Adrian Renard, who founded the company in 1975.

STEVE COLLINS of Ireland survived an early scare before retaining his WBO super-middleweight crown in Glasgow. Collins, defending his title for the seventh time, was floored by American Craig Cummings after just 12 seconds. The fall toughened the Irishman's resolve and he quickly put his opponent down before forcing a stoppage early in the third round.

IVANO BONETTI, the former Juventus player who left Grimsby in May 1996 after his cheekbone was broken in a dressing-room punch-up with the then manager Brian Laws, has failed again in his bid to buy Grimsby and install himself as its player-manager. Bonetti, who became the first Italian to play in the British Football League when he moved from Torino to Grimsby two years ago, had a $1 million offer turned down by the board.

WIM JANSEN, the former Holland and Feyenoord midfielder, became Celtic's highest-paid coach when the joined the Glasgow club last week. Two months after the manager Tommy Burns left Parkhead, Jansen, aged 53, accepted a three-year performance-related contract worth upwards of $1.65 million a year.

WILSON KIPKETER, the disaffected Kenyan who now runs for Denmark, equalled Sebastian Coe's 16-year-old world record in the 800 metres in Stockholm.

WIGAN Warriors imposed the maximum club fine of $800 on Gary Connolly, Martin Hall and Craig Murdock for drunken conduct on the final leg of a flight home from Australia. In a letter the club chairman Jack Robinson told them that their "behaviour was unbecoming of Rugby League players".